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Caitlin Moran's Celebrity Watch Times2



Bricks&Mortar Confessions of a reluctant landlord Pullout

Relief for millions of homeowners as mortgage rates fall

George Nixon Money Reporter
Steven Swinford Political Editor

Mortgage rates are beginning to fall in a boost for 2 million homeowners after the Bank of England held interest rates at 5.25 per cent.

NatWest, Nationwide and TSB all cut the price of mortgages yesterday amid mounting optimism that rates have peaked. Other lenders are expected to follow, with brokers predicting more fixed-rate deals at less than 5 per cent, helping 700,000 homeowners whose deals are expected to come to an end in the next six months and a further 1.3 million on variable rates.

Jeremy Hunt, the chancellor, said "we are starting to see the tide turn against high inflation" but added that the government would still practise fiscal restraint to "see the job through".

He warned that tax cuts will be "virtually impossible" in the autumn statement, despite official figures showing that the state borrowed less than expected, saying: "I will have another set of, frankly, very difficult decisions."

The decision to hold interest rates ends a run of 14 successive increases. Officials on the Bank's nine-member monetary policy committee were split, with five voting against a rise and four for. It came a day after official data revealed a surprise fall in inflation last month to 6.7 per cent; it had been expected to rise on a one-off basis because of increases in food costs and the price of petrol. Andrew Bailey, the governor of the Bank, said real incomes adjusted for inflation are now rising. "This has been a big shock, a very welcome shock, to people's incomes," he told the radio station LBC.

While the decision to hold interest rates represented positive news for homeowners, there were concerns that savers will be hit. Martin Lewis, the personal finance expert and campaigner,

Continued on page 2

DAVID PAUL MORRIS/BLOOMBERG/GETTY IMAGES



Murdoch takes up new role

Rupert Murdoch is stepping down as the chairman of News Corp, which owns The Times. He will be succeeded by his elder son, Lachlan Pages 4-5

PM wants A-level reform to boost pupils' life skills

● Teenagers would study more subjects for longer ● Sunak aims to open divisions with Labour

Oliver Wright Policy Editor
Steven Swinford, Rachel Sylvester

Rishi Sunak is drawing up plans for a radical reform of A-levels with a new style of British baccalaureate under which children would study more subjects after the age of 16.

As part of his pledge to announce a series of long-term decisions to "change" Britain, the prime minister is expected to endorse a key recommendation of The Times Education Commission by setting out proposals to move towards a more continental-style system of education.

Under the reforms being drawn up at No 10, children would be required to study a wider range of subjects in post-16 education, and English and maths would become compulsory up until the age of 18. The proposals are partly in response to the prime minister's commitment that all children should study some form of maths up to the age of 18; it is not possible to meet that commitment under the present A-level system.

While the plans are unlikely to take effect before the next election, Sunak hopes the move will open up a clear dividing line with Labour, amid claims that the government has lost the reforming zeal of its early years in power.

A senior government source said that while options were being looked into, no final decision had been taken.

Sunak initially floated the idea during his unsuccessful leadership campaign against Liz Truss last year, but was persuaded to put it on hold to concentrate on stabilising the economy and prioritise issues of immediate concern to voters, such as NHS waiting times and migrant boat crossings. A senior Tory source said Sunak was now determined to press ahead as part of his pledge to address the "bigger, longer-term questions" facing the country.

"He came back from the summer with a series of things he wanted to move on," the source said. "A-level reform is a critical part of it." It remains undecided whether the revamped qualifications would get a new name, as when O-levels were replaced with

Continued on page 2

Let us join forces to save planet, King tells French

Valentine Low Paris

Charles III promised to use "the time that is granted to me as King" to strengthen the relationship between Britain and France as he put climate change at the heart of his historic speech to the French senate.

The King, who called for the two nations' historic alliance to become an "*entente* for sustainability" to confront the "biodiversity emergency", was given a standing ovation when he arrived in the chamber and another, lasting nearly two minutes, at the end of his speech. He spoke in French and English during the keynote address of his and the Queen's three-day state visit.

Recalling President Macron's tribute to Elizabeth II for her Platinum Jubilee, which described her as the "golden thread" binding two countries together, the King said: "In the rich and complex tapestry of the relationship between France and the United Kingdom, my mother's golden thread will forever shine brightly. Let it inspire us all."

In an 18-minute speech that evoked memories of the Second World War, he said that "we once again face unprovoked aggression on our continent" and spoke of the importance of standing in "resolute solidarity with the Ukrainian people". He continued: "Just as we stand together against military aggression, so must we strive together to protect the world from our most existential challenge of all — that of global warming, climate change and the catastrophic destruction of nature."

Royal sources dismissed any suggestion that the King might be engaging in veiled criticism of Rishi Sunak's environmental policies. They stressed that that the speech would have been vetted by Downing Street.

State visit, pages 8-9

VISIT…

LANZAROTE Caliente.com

News

Today's highlights

7.20am **Sylvie-Agnès Bermann**, France's former ambassador to the UK
7.30am **Mark Spencer**, minister for food, farming and fisheries
8.35am **James Murray**, shadow financial secretary to the Treasury
1.45pm **Giuseppe Dell'Anno**, former winner of the Great British Bake Off, right
6.35pm **Caroline Lucas**, the Green Party's former leader and its first MP



TIMES RADIO
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TODAY'S EDITION

Beautician is suspected spy

A 29-year-old beautician is one of five Bulgarian nationals charged with spying. Vanya Gaberova, who owns a nail and eyelash salon in Acton, west London, and four compatriots are accused of passing information to the Russian state. **Page 11**

Car sale targets from next year

Rishi Sunak has told car manufacturers he will bring in legal targets for electric vehicle sales from next year after pushing back the end of new petrol and diesel purchases to 2035. He said Margaret Thatcher "would have agreed" with his plans. **Page 12**

Weird world of Wordle cheats

Up to 10,000 Wordle players a day cheat in order to pretend they guessed its mystery five-letter word in one go, a retired professor's analysis suggests. The chance of correctly guessing the puzzle's answer at random is just 0.043 per cent, or 1 in 2,315. **Page 18**

177 days since Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich was detained in Russia
#FreeEvan



Poland halts Kyiv arms help

Poland announced yesterday that it would stop sending weapons to Ukraine in a row over grain supplies. Mateusz Morawiecki, the Polish prime minister, said the move would enable his country to focus on upgrading its own military. **Page 32**

Pow! Watford's superhero deal

Watford is to become the new home of Batman and Superman after Warner Bros confirmed a huge expansion of its Leavesden film studios, in a move expected to create 4,000 jobs and add £200 million a year to the UK economy. **Page 37**

Farrell still in coach's favour

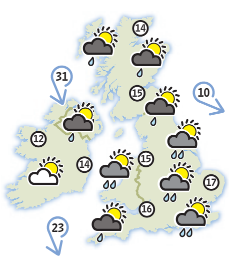
Steve Borthwick has indicated that Owen Farrell will be in his first-choice side for the rest of the World Cup. Farrell will play at fly half against Chile tomorrow, replacing George Ford, who was England's star player in wins over Argentina and Japan. **Page 70**

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THE WEATHER



Sunny intervals, but rather cloudy with scattered showers, blustery in the north. **Full forecast, page 59**

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Further doubt on HS2 as Hunt admits costs are out of control

Geraldine Scott Political Reporter

The cost of building HS2 is "getting totally out of control", the chancellor has admitted, amid speculation over the high-speed rail line's future.

Jeremy Hunt told LBC that he understood concerns from some Tory MPs in the north and Midlands over whether HS2 would be cancelled or scaled back.

But he said MPs in the so-called red wall "will also be worried if we have an infrastructure project where the costs are getting totally out of control".

It has been suggested, according to a leaked photograph published by The Independent, that the government is considering scrapping the Birmingham to Manchester leg in an effort to save £35 billion, despite £2.3 billion having already been ploughed into stage two of the high-speed line.

Hunt said: "We haven't made any decisions on this. We are looking at all the options. But we do need to find a way of delivering infrastructure projects that doesn't cost taxpayers billions and billions of pounds."

George Osborne, the former chancellor, said curtailing HS2 would "be a big blow to levelling up". Speaking on the Political Currency podcast he hosts with Ed Balls, the former shadow chancellor, Osborne said: "In the last week I've picked up a big internal row going on inside the Conservative Party, that hasn't yet broken surface, about whether he should go ahead with this.

"I think it'll be hard to claim you're gonna take the kind of difficult decisions for the long term if you cancel the long-term plan to build a high-speed rail line that has had the support of administrations, both Labour and Conservative, over the last 15 years — and go for the easy thing of caving into the lobbies who don't want it built."

Richard Holden, a transport minister, refused to guarantee that HS2 would reach Manchester. The planned railway is intended to link London, the Midlands and the north but has been plagued by delays and ballooning costs. Ministers have already moved to pause parts of the project and even axed sections in the north.

The eastern leg to Leeds was dropped in 2021 and it was confirmed in March that construction between Birmingham and Crewe would be delayed by two years and that services may not enter central London until the 2040s.

Mark Harper, the transport secretary, announced that work at Euston would be paused for two years as costs had ballooned to £4.8 billion compared with an initial budget of £2.6 billion. The pause means that Old Oak Common will be the railway's only London station when services to and from Birmingham Curzon Street begin between 2029 and 2033.

Labour has accused the Tories of a "great rail betrayal" following speculation that the Manchester leg could be axed. But Sir Keir Starmer, the party leader, declined to promise to build HS2 in full if the northwest route is cut.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

PM wants A-level reform

GCSEs in the 1980s. Other developments are expected to include a significant announcement on infrastructure spending, which is likely to include scrapping the northern leg of HS2.

Sunak's schools plan endorses a key recommendation of The Times Education Commission, which in its report last year called for a British baccalaureate that included "broader academic and vocational qualifications at 18".

Sunak has described education as the "silver bullet" in public policy that could improve lives and described it as the "single most important reason why I came into politics". He believes that children are allowed to drop subjects such as maths and English too early, and that a broader-based curriculum to 18 is a better approach, but has faced opposition in Whitehall from some who argue that the last thing schools need is another restructuring of the curriculum and exam system after Covid.

Sunak also wants to create a network of "world-class" technical institutions with links to industry, modelled on the Russell Group of universities, with the power to award degrees.

Robert Halfon, the former chairman of the education select committee, supports the initiatives. He was made minister of state for skills by Sunak, having backed him for leader because he understood that to "improve productivity we have to improve skills". Halfon has said: "The British baccalaureate … will mean that students have a much wider curriculum so they get the skills that they need and employers want."

The Times Education Commission's final report, published last year, also called for a slimmed down set of exams at 16 and backed elite technical sixth forms with close links to industry.

The Department for Education said: "We have already taken steps to reform the post-16 qualifications landscape, including reforming technical education and delivering millions of new high-quality apprenticeships. Alongside this, we have set out bold plans to ensure that every young person studies some form of maths up to the age of 18 to give them the skills they need to succeed in the jobs of the future."

Political reports, pages 12-13

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Relief for homeowners

said banks might start to "shave down their rates at speed". He urged people to secure fixed-rate savings deals.

Those on standard variable rate and tracker mortgages would have seen their repayments rise by between £15 and £26 a month if the Bank had raised rates by 0.25 percentage points.

Andrew Montlake, from the mortgage broker Coreco, said: "It now looks like we are at the very top of the interest rate cycle, with lenders having more space to engage in a rate war … we will see more deals available starting with a four rather than a five, but this will be a slow and steady fall rather than anything dramatic." Hina Bhudia, from the broker Knight Frank Finance, said the Bank's decision "paved the way" for more deals below 5 per cent — but Ben Merritt, director of mortgages at Yorkshire Building Society, said fixed rates probably would have continued to fall even if the base rate had risen.

Average mortgage rates peaked at a 15-year high of over 6.8 per cent in July because of fears that the Bank rate would need to rise to over 6 per cent to bring down inflation. However, swap rates — the expectations of future rates, used to set fixed mortgages — have tumbled; the two-year swap rate has fallen from 5.7 per cent on August 21 to 5.08 per cent yesterday. This will feed through into cheaper mortgage deals over the next two to four weeks.

Despite this, those whose fixed deals end in the next six months still face a large rise in repayments, often coming off rates of 2.5 per cent or less.

Sterling suffers, page 37

Analysis

Has the Bank of England finally reached its summit (Mehreen Khan writes)? The decision to hold interest rates steady at 5.25 per cent, by 5-4 on the monetary policy committee (MPC), confirmed that it was a knife-edge call.

For weeks senior rate-setters have been hinting that Britain's monetary stance is close to where it needed to be to bring down inflation by reducing employers' appetite to hire new workers and slowing the flow of consumer spending.

The committee was split between those, such as Andrew Bailey, the governor, and Huw Pill, his chief economist, who think inflation is trending down fast enough to warrant a stop. Bailey and four other members think August's notable drop in services sector inflation and core goods inflation shows that the monetary policy medicine is finally kicking in.

The dissenting rate-setters, including Sir Jon Cunliffe, the outgoing deputy governor, are putting more weight on the fact that private-sector wage growth stood at 8.1 per cent in July. They think August's inflation figures were partly driven by one-off factors such as a drop in air fares, warranting another quarter-point tightening. Both arguments have merit and confirm the Bank's aggressive inflation-fighting action, which started in December 2021, is drawing to an end.

A shift from 5.25 to 5.5 per cent may still happen in November if core inflation remains high or wage growth does not slow. The Bank will also produce new inflation forecasts to guide its decision in two months' time.

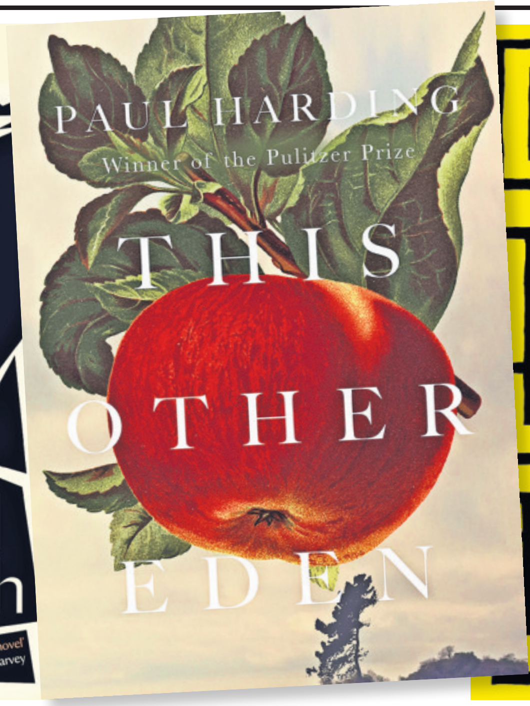
The difference between 5.25 and 5.5 per cent may seem marginal now but will take on added importance if the Bank is planning to keep rates at this range for most of next year. The signalling from the MPC suggests that investors should not expect any significant monetary easing.

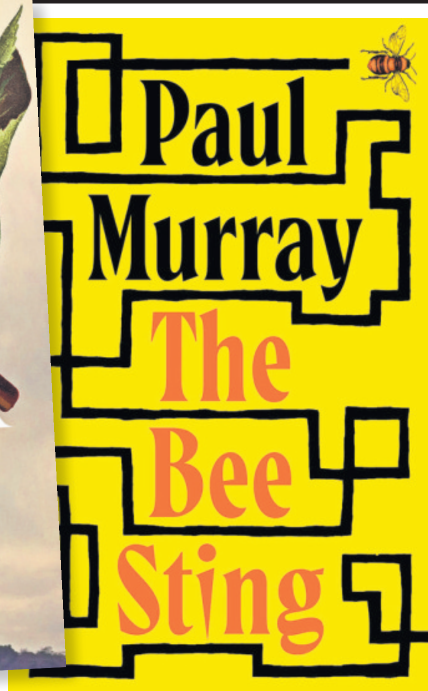
The US Federal Reserve did the same on Wednesday, holding rates and slashing its forecasts for future cuts from four to two in 2024.

In the words of Pill, the Bank's interest rate path will more resemble Table Mountain than the Matterhorn.

The last time the MPC was this divided was in February 2022, when members differed over borrowing after the invasion of Ukraine. The latest vote shows that things get tougher as the peak comes into view.







Three Pauls outnumber women on shortlist for the Booker prize

The top literary award is bucking the trend in the female-dominated world of fiction, reports **Constance Kampfner**

Cast your eyes over the bestseller list and you'll notice a trend: female authors dominate the world of fiction. At least that has been the case in recent years. Yet it is one the Booker Prize has just bucked — by shortlisting more men called Paul for this year's award than women.

Paul Harding (*This Other Eden*), Paul Lynch (*Prophet Song*) and Paul Murray (*The Bee Sting*) are among six authors nominated for Britain's premier literary prize. Alongside them sits another male novelist, Jonathan Escoffery, for *If I Survive You* and only two women: Sarah Bernstein with *Study for Obedience* and Chetna Maroo with *Western Lane*.

Asked about this unlikely trio of Pauls, Robert Webb, the *Peep Show* actor and author who sits on the panel of judges, quipped: "It could have been more Pauls. These Pauls should count themselves very lucky."

Indeed they should. Only five other Pauls have been nominated in the history of the Booker Prize since its first edition in 1969. Paul Scott, who won in 1977 with *Staying On*; Paul Bailey who was shortlisted in 1977 and 1986; Paul Kingsnorth, longlisted in 2014; Paul Beatty, whose satire of racial politics in the US, *The Sellout*, won in 2016 and Paul Auster, shortlisted in 2017.

This year's number of Pauls is a turn of events at a time when there has been a growing feeling in publishing that men are giving up on writing fiction.

While in the Eighties and Nineties the bestseller shortlists and book prizes were the preserve of the likes of Martin Amis, Julian Barnes, Ian McEwan, William Boyd and Kazuo Ishiguro, today it is normally a more female cohort who dominate.

According to figures from The Bookseller, 629 of the 1,000 bestselling fiction titles from 2020 were written by women. Within the "general and literary fiction" category, 75 per cent were by female authors.

The most recent Sunday Times bestseller list is further illustration: of the 20 hardback and paperback novels featured, 14 were authored by women.



Men have been appearing in smaller numbers on literary prize shortlists too. They were absent among the nominees for the most recent Costa best novel award in 2021 and none could be found on this year's Rathbones prize shortlist.

When the Booker Prize longlist was published last month, the number of Irish authors (four out of 13) was also remarked upon. Two have made it to the shortlist — Murray and Lynch. Of the other four authors, one is British, one Canadian and two are American.



Paul Lynch and Paul Harding, below, are both in the running

"Return on investment," was how James Shapiro, an author also on the judging panel, explained this trend. "There are certain countries that have invested in arts, that continue to invest in artists and writers," he said. "It's no accident that the arts are flourishing in Ireland."

None of the six authors on the list had previously been shortlisted for the prize. Their novels touch on themes including climate change, immigration, financial hardship, the persecution of minorities, political extremism and the erosion of personal freedoms.

Shapiro, who himself recently won the Baillie Gifford anniversary prize for his biography *1599: A Year in the Life of William Shakespeare*, said the books selected reflected "the grim times in which I certainly feel we live".

"One of the things that we discussed in speaking about which books should make the longlist or the shortlist is the way in which great fiction says something about the moment that daily journalism cannot capture," he said.

"We turn to creative writers to see more deeply into the crises that we face. And if you recognise some of those crises in the fiction, it's because they exist in our world."

The judging panel this year is chaired by the twice-shortlisted novelist Esi Edugyan and also includes Adjoa Andoh, the actress, writer and director and the poet, critic and lecturer Mary Jean Chan, alongside Shapiro and Webb.

All the shortlisted authors receive £2,500 and a bespoke bound edition of their book. The winner, who receives £50,000, will be announced at a ceremony on November 26.

Justice calls for winner with a sting in its tale

John Self
Comment

The Booker Prize shortlist is out, and it's a bit of a disappointment, which leaves off some of the best books on the longlist — not to mention the ones that didn't even make it that far. (We won't forsake you, Claire Kilroy.)

There are more Pauls than women, more Americans than Britons, two debuts, and only one masterpiece that seems likely to have the power of big past winners such as *Shuggie Bain*. There's not much star power either (none of the six has previously been Booker-shortlisted), which might be a hurdle for booksellers and browsers, though if there's any justice and Paul Murray wins for *The Bee Sting*, he'll be a household name before the year is out.

The shortlist confirms that the UK's most prestigious literary award isn't very British these days. For the fourth year running, only one British writer makes it — debutant Chetna Maroo — and the real winners are the Irish writers, with places for Murray and Paul Lynch. When asked why such a small country was so successful, the judge James Shapiro said simply, "Return on investment". Financial and cultural support for writers in Ireland has paid dividends. Britain needs to learn the lesson.

Let's recall the longlisted titles that were spurned. The two best-known names produced two of the finest books: Sebastian Barry's *Old God's Time* shows the benefits of experience — one of the best novels by an old master — while Tan Twan Eng's *The House of Doors* is a quiet but satisfying account of Somerset Maugham's time in Malaysia in 1921.

And the dropping of Martin MacInnes's *In Ascension* is a loss. It's a tremendous novel that takes you to surprising places so carefully that you don't notice until everything has changed.

Who will win? Our money's on *The Bee Sting*, but it hardly matters: we know from previous judges that the winner is often decided by bargaining and horse-trading, and the winner is as likely to be the least-hated book as the best-loved.



‘Formidable operator’ who made

Trailblazer hailed for reshaping media takes next step in career that spans almost 70 years, writes **Fiona Hamilton**

Rupert Murdoch is moving into a new role at News Corporation and is to be succeeded as sole chairman by his son Lachlan, it was announced yesterday.

Murdoch, 92, will also step down as head of Fox Corporation, owner of Fox News, now to be run by his son, 52.

He moves into a new role as chairman emeritus of both News Corp, the publisher of The Times and The Sunday Times, and Fox. It follows a nearly 70-year career in which he grew a $25 billion media empire across the United States, Britain, Europe and Australia.

He pledged to continue to be “involved every day in the contest of ideas” at his newspapers, television networks and publishers, adding that both he and his companies were in robust health.

However, he hailed his son as the future: “For my entire professional life, I have been engaged daily with news and ideas, and that will not change. But the time is right for me to take on different roles, knowing that we have truly talented teams and a passionate, principled leader in Lachlan, who will become sole chairman of both companies.”

It secures his elder son’s position as the successor to his multibillion-pound international media empire.

Lachlan Murdoch, who already co-chairs News Corp and oversees Fox, congratulated his father on an “incredible” career: “We thank him for his vision, his pioneering spirit, his steadfast determination and the enduring legacy he leaves to the companies he founded and countless people he has impacted. We are grateful that he will serve as chairman emeritus and know he will continue to provide valued counsel.”



Last night leaders in politics and business paid tribute to a trailblazer who changed the media. Boris Johnson, the former prime minister, said: “Hail Rupe! He not only built a media empire vast enough to intimidate politicians on every continent. Through constant technological innovation he did more than any press baron in the last 100 years to promote the cause of the global free media that is indispensable for democracy and progress.”

Jeremy Hunt, the chancellor, described him as “one of the giants of his era” and a “formidable operator”.

Piers Morgan, who edited the News of the World in the mid-1990s and is now a TalkTV presenter, described him as a “bold, brilliant, visionary leader whose audacity and tenacity built a magnificently successful global media empire”.

News Corp also owns publications including The Wall Street Journal, The Australian and The Sun, as well as the publisher HarperCollins and TalkTV. Fox Corp also owns the Fox broadcast network, along with local TV stations and the Tubi streaming service.

Rupert Murdoch said: “Neither excessive pride nor false humility are admirable qualities. But I am truly proud of what we have achieved collectively through the decades, and I owe much to my colleagues whose contributions to our success have sometimes been unseen outside the company but are deeply appreciated by me.

“Whether the truck drivers distributing our papers, the cleaners who toil when we have left the office, the assistants who make us look good or the skilled operators behind the cameras or the computer code, we would be less successful and have less positive impact on society without your dedication.”

His passion for media was triggered by his father, Sir Keith Murdoch, the Australian journalist and newspaper proprietor. Rupert Murdoch expanded his empire in Australia before taking on Fleet Street in 1969 with the purchase of the News of the World and The Sun, which he grew into the country’s most recognised and bestselling tabloids. He went on to buy The Times and The Sunday Times in 1981.

He bought newspapers in America including the New York Post before moving into television to create Fox News, which became the dominant US cable news subscription network, and then into the film industry with 21st Century Fox. It was sold to Disney for $71 billion in 2019. The previous year Murdoch exited Sky, nearly three decades after launching the satellite broadcaster.

Murdoch and his son have worked closely together as joint heads of News Corp for nearly a decade, focusing on investment in new technologies and making the media company resilient in the challenging digital age.

His statement, announcing the company changes, paid tribute to both his own father and his son. “My father firmly believed in freedom, and Lachlan is absolutely committed to the cause. Self-serving bureaucracies are seeking to silence those who would question their provenance and purpose,” he said. “Most of the media is in cahoots with those elites, peddling political narratives rather than pursuing the truth.”

Murdoch said he would still be involved in both companies every day: “I will be watching our broadcasts with a critical eye, reading our newspapers and websites and books with much interest, and reaching out to you with thoughts, ideas and advice.”

The changes take effect in November after shareholder meetings.



Rupert Murdoch with media figures including Tony Blackburn, Derek Jameson, Andrew Neil and Kay Burley at the launch of Sky TV in 1989. Above, the news executive in the 1960s



The tycoon in the press hall of the New York Post and, right, announcing his purchase of Times Newspapers in 1981. Lachlan

Through the years

1952
Inherits father’s interests in The News, a newspaper in Adelaide, and goes on to expand Australian publishing and television holdings, including launching The Australian, his first national title

1969
Purchases News of the World and The Sun

1973
Begins purchasing American newspapers and three years later brings the New York Post into the expanding empire

1981
Purchases The Times and The Sunday Times

1985
News Corp purchases 21st Century Fox. Its studio has produced films including Avatar and Titanic, two of the highest grossing of all time

1986
Shifts printing works to Wapping in east London with new state-of-the-art technology and sees off a lengthy dispute by print workers

1987
News Corporation buys the US publisher Harper & Row, which later becomes HarperCollins

1989
Sky launches as the UK’s first satellite TV service

1996
The Fox News Channel launches in the US and becomes the dominant American cable news subscription network

2007
News Corp completes the purchase of Dow Jones including the Wall Street Journal, one of the most trusted newspapers in the US

2018
Sky is taken over by Comcast for £29.7 billion, making it the most valuable British company founded from scratch in three decades

2019
Completes the sale of 21st Century Fox to Disney for $71 billion. Fox Corporation launches as a standalone publicly traded company

news right around the world



ROGER RESSMEYER; PAUL MORIGI/GETTY IMAGES; PETER BOYCE FOR THE TIMES





Murdoch, at a White House state dinner in 2019 with his wife, Sarah, will now lead News Corporation and Fox Corporation

Empire of the son: Lachlan steps up with sole control

Profile

Rupert Murdoch's decision to step back has secured his elder son Lachlan's position as the successor to his multibillion-pound international media empire (Fiona Hamilton writes).

For the best part of a decade, father and son have worked closely together to lead both News Corporation, publisher of The Times and The Sunday Times, and Fox Corporation, which owns Fox News.

Lachlan Murdoch, 52, has extensive experience across the family business, from cutting his teeth as a young man in Australian newspapers to running 21st Century Fox and overseeing Fox News.

He has taken on the most senior management roles since 2014, when he was elevated to co-chairman of News Corp alongside his father. The following year he was appointed co-executive chairman of 21st Century Fox. 21st Century Fox was later spun off from the new Fox Corp, which now owns the broadcast network along with local TV stations and the Tubi streaming service.

He is known to have inherited his father's passion for media, including newspapers, and has spoken about the need to reinvest, keep up with digital innovation and adapt traditional media for the digital age.

Born in London and educated at Princeton, Lachlan Murdoch's initial foray into the family business involved its newspaper arm. He was trained in Australia and by 22 was in charge of Queensland newspapers before moving to oversee The Australian, the national title. Staff in London have fond memories of him mastering sub-editing at The Sun.

He moved to the US and by his mid-30s held a number of senior executive roles at News Corp. At 21st Century Fox he was directly responsible for the company's US television stations group and publishing assets. As publisher of the New York Post he overhauled the tabloid and increased its circulation by more than 40 per cent to become America's fastest-growing newspaper.

In 2005 he resigned from his role as deputy chief operating officer and returned to Australia with his wife, Sarah, a former model. That year he founded the private investment firm Illyria, which acquired Nova, a network of radio stations that has become the country's FM leader.

Nearly a decade later, he returned to the family business and was appointed co-executive chairman at Fox as well as co-chairing News Corp with his father. He played an instrumental role in the Disney deal, in which 21st Century Fox was sold for $71.3 billion.

Lachlan Murdoch then became chief executive of Fox Corp, a new entity that spun out of the deal that includes Fox News. He made clear he did not want to enter the "bloodbath" of the streaming wars with paid-for platforms such as Netflix, and Fox concentrated instead on live news and live sports, as well as on entertainment "in a focused way". He acquired the Tubi free streaming service for $440 million — it was recently valued at $3 billion.

Challenges at Fox have included the legal action for defamation by Dominion Voting Systems, which alleged that the channel's hosts and guests had amplified false claims that it helped to rig the US election. Fox settled for $787 million.

Lachlan Murdoch paid tribute to his father's "vision, pioneering spirit, his steadfast determination and the enduring legacy he leaves to the companies he founded and countless people he has impacted".

He added: "We are grateful that he will serve as chairman emeritus, and know he will continue to provide valued counsel to both companies."

Lachlan Murdoch is a father of three. He is a keen rock climber in his spare time.

There'll never be another Rupert … tributes from politics and media

Alex Farber Media Correspondent
Fiona Hamilton Chief Reporter
Steven Swinford Political Editor

Leaders in politics, business and media paid tribute to Rupert Murdoch last night as a trailblazer who fundamentally changed the worlds of newspapers, broadcasting and entertainment.

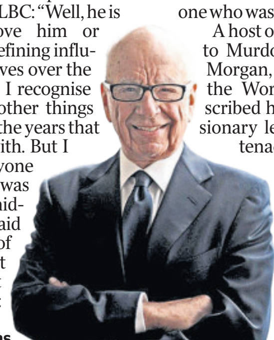
Boris Johnson, the former prime minister, said: "Hail Rupe! He not only built a media empire vast enough to intimidate politicians on every continent. Through constant technological innovation he did more than any press baron in the last 100 years to promote the cause of the global free media that is indispensable for democracy and progress."

Jeremy Hunt, the chancellor, described him as "one of the giants of his era" and a "formidable operator", while former editors said he was the greatest media entrepreneur of his age.

John Whittingdale, a media minister, said: "Rupert Murdoch is a giant of the media industry who revolutionised both newspapers and television in the UK, extending choice and bringing popular entertainment to millions."

Baroness Stowell of Beeston, chair of the Lords communications and digital committee, said: "Rupert Murdoch's investment in and commitment to British journalism, that gives voice to the fair expectations of your average man and woman, has been immensely important in holding the powerful to account. Long may that legacy continue."

Hunt, who served as secretary of state for culture, media and sport between 2010 and 2012, told LBC: "Well, he is someone who, love him or loathe him, had a defining influence on all of our lives over the last half century… I recognise there'll be lots of other things that he's done over the years that people disagreed with. But I don't think anyone would disagree this was an absolutely formidable operator." He said he had "moments of feeling different emotions" about Murdoch, adding: "I do have enormous respect for someone who was one of the giants of his era".



Rupert Murdoch has played a dominant role

A host of media figures paid tribute to Murdoch's 70-year career. Piers Morgan, who edited the News of the World in the mid-1990s, described him as a "bold, brilliant, visionary leader whose audacity and tenacity built a magnificently successful global media empire". He added: "It's been a privilege to work for him on and off for the past 30 years, and an ongoing masterclass in journalism and business."

Kelvin MacKenzie, who edited The Sun between 1981 and 1994, said: "There will never be another Rupert. Nobody can dominate the media now. The power has moved, thanks to social media, from the corporate to the consumer. His greatest legacy is The Times. He swallowed losses of nearly £2 billion over four decades before making money. No other entrepreneur would have done that. All journalists should be grateful he invested his time and energy in the world of news."

Trevor Kavanagh, the Sun columnist and former political editor, told TalkTV: "He is a colossus, not only in business, but in the generation of news."

Sir Jeremy Darroch, the former chief executive of Sky, said: "Rupert has been absolutely fantastic. He has had such a huge impression and shaped the industry globally. He revolutionised the way people watch television for the better."

John Bercow should do well in Traitors reality show, says Dorries

Alex Farber Media Correspondent

One of the highest-profile political defectors in recent years has found his home on *The Traitors*, the reality show based on deceiving fellow contestants.

John Bercow, 60, has been named among the cast of the second series of the US version of the show hosted by the Scottish actor Alan Cumming.

The former Conservative MP for Buckingham was elected Speaker of the House in 2009 and held the position for a decade before choosing not to seek re-election in 2019. He joined the Labour Party in 2021 but was suspended last year after a Commons complaints body found he had bullied staff.

The former culture secretary Nadine Dorries, who has appeared in *I'm A Celebrity… Get Me Out Of Here!* on ITV, said he was a great fit for the show. "He should do well," she told The Times.

The Traitors, which is filmed in a castle deep in the Scottish Highlands, is billed as a "nail-biting psychological adventure in which treachery and deceit are the nature of the game". The game revolves around a group of "traitors" attempting to steal a prize of $250,000 from the "faithful" players.

Bercow will appear alongside 20 contestants, including the former heavyweight boxer Deontay Wilder and the *Love Island* winner Ekin-Su Cülcüloglu.

The first series of the US version aired on BBC3 after the British version became one of BBC1's biggest competition shows. It started in November and generated more than 28 million views on iPlayer, with five million people tuning in live.

The British production company Studio Lambert is making the second series of the US and UK shows, which are filmed back to back in the same location. *The Traitors* US will air on NBC's streaming service Peacock next year.

Bercow's appearance follows the participation of the former health secretary Matt Hancock in *Celebrity SAS: Who Dares Wins* on Channel 4. The MP took part in the jungle phase of SAS selection in Thung Ui, North Vietnam, with other personalities including Gareth Gates and Melinda Messenger.

He said that it was one of his toughest mental and physical experiences, adding: "It really opens your eyes and makes you look into yourself."

Hancock, 44, lost the Tory whip over his stint in the Australian jungle on *I'm A Celebrity* last year, which was criticised by Rishi Sunak.

Warning on race for AI regulation

Mark Sellman
Technology Correspondent

The international community is in a race against time to force new AI regulation on tech companies, the deputy prime minister will say today.

Oliver Dowden will warn that "global regulation is falling behind current advances" in artificial intelligence.

In a speech to the UN General Assembly he will say: "The starting gun has been fired on a globally competitive race in which individual companies as well as countries will strive to push the boundaries as far and fast as possible. In the past, leaders have responded to scientific and technological developments with retrospective regulation. But in this instance the necessary guardrails, regulation and governance must be developed in a parallel process with the technological progress. Yet, at the moment, global regulation is falling behind current advances."

Britain is hosting an AI safety conference in November at Bletchley Park which will be attended by world leaders and the heads of major tech companies. It is aimed at tackling the growing pace of development in AI, especially at the "frontier" companies such as OpenAI, Google DeepMind, Microsoft and Anthropic.

However, some have expressed fears of "regulatory capture", where the companies set out the rules they will follow.

Dowden's speech addresses those fears, saying: "Tech companies must not mark their own homework, just as governments and citizens must have confidence that risks are properly mitigated."

Dowden is speaking in place of Rishi Sunak. The prime minister has blamed diary pressures for staying away, but has been accused of snubbing the event.

PHIL WILKINSON



Around the world in 80 daisies Minty Mackenzie adds to her colourful floral creation inspired by Madagascar in the Fleurs de Villes Voyage exhibition, based on top destinations, which runs until Sunday at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Edinburgh

Sunak 'used No 10 for Tory PR'

Chris Smyth Whitehall Editor

Simon Case, the cabinet secretary, has been accused of allowing Rishi Sunak to use Downing Street as "PR for the Conservative Party" after he made his net-zero announcement in front of the Tory conference slogan.

Sunak used a lectern that said "long-term decisions for a brighter future", the slogan the Conservatives will use in Manchester in just over a week's time.

The ministerial code says that ministers "must not use government resources for party political purposes".

Labour has warned Case that he has put at risk the impartiality of the civil service. Whitehall's code also states that officials must not "use official resources for party political purposes".

Jonathan Ashworth, the shadow paymaster-general, wrote in a letter seen by The Times: "Whitehall is not the PR department for the Conservative Party, and any attempt to use it in this way threatens to undermine the integrity and impartiality of the civil service."

A government spokeswoman argued that the slogan was "government messaging" rather than a Conservative phrase, saying: "It is not uncommon for the governing party to use government messaging in its materials."



Rishi Sunak's policy announcement behind his party's conference slogan broke impartiality rules, critics said

Starmer 'to push for closer EU links'

Oliver Wright Policy Editor

A future Labour government would not diverge from EU laws or do "different things", Sir Keir Starmer said at a conference of centre-left leaders in Canada.

In unguarded remarks that have been seized on by the Tories, Starmer went further than Labour's official position on the kind of post-Brexit relationship the party will seek with Brussels. He suggested that Labour wanted to foster close ties with the bloc, arguing that "there's a lot more common ground than you might think".

At an event on Saturday with Jonas Gahr Store, the Norwegian prime minister, Starmer said: "Most of the conflict with the UK being outside of the UK [sic] arises insofar as the UK wants to diverge and do different things to the rest of our EU partners. Obviously, the more we share values, the more we share a future together, the less the conflict. And actually different ways of solving problems become available."

He added: "We don't want to diverge, we don't want to lower standards, we don't want to rip up environmental standards, standards for people that work, food standards and all the rest of it. So suddenly, you're in a space where, notwithstanding the obvious fact that we're outside the EU and not in the [European Economic Area], there's a lot more common ground than you might think."

Starmer's remarks, first reported by Sky News, are in contrast to Labour's position on Brexit which he laid out in a speech last year. He said then that Labour's plan was to "make Brexit work" and pledged to "use our flexibility outside of the EU to ensure British regulation is adapted to suit British needs".

The latest remarks will lead to speculation that Starmer would like to move Britain into a position where a future Labour government could take the country back into the EU's single market even though this has been denied. A Labour Party spokesman said: "We've left the European Union and we're not going back in any form. We don't support dynamic alignment. We're not joining the single market or the customs union. We will not be in a situation where we are a rule taker. Any decisions on what standards we follow will be made in the UK parliament.

"The Tories have not used Brexit to diverge on food, environmental or labour standards and if they have a plan to do so they should come clean with people."

Anand Menon, director of the think tank UK in a Changing Europe, said the most interesting thing about Starmer's remarks was the self-confidence it showed in being prepared to "pick a fight" with the government over Brexit.

"They know the government has shot its own reputation and even Leave voters are unlikely to respond to any appeal to defend 'the real Brexit'," he said. "The polling shows that voters don't think Brexit is working and for that they blame the government."

Charles Grant, director of the Centre for European Reform, told Sky News the comments went further than what Starmer had said previously, and that Brexiteers might question the point of leaving the EU if the UK does not significantly deregulate. "He's trying to soften up the other world leaders so they know what to expect when he becomes prime minister, if he does," he said.

Michael Gove, the levelling-up secretary, said the comments reflected "the real Keir Starmer", adding: "I'm afraid that Keir Starmer has shown that he wants us to go back into the EU and back to the Brexit agonies of the past."

Brand ‘exposed himself to woman then laughed on air’

Charlotte Wace, Rosamund Urwin Mario Ledwith, Mark Sellman

Russell Brand has been accused of exposing himself to a woman then laughing about it during his BBC radio show.

The corporation has said it is looking into the allegation as part of a wider investigation into his behaviour.

In an interview with Nomia Iqbal, the BBC’s North America correspondent, the woman claimed the incident occurred in 2008 when she was working for a media company in Los Angeles.

The allegation comes after a joint investigation by The Times, The Sunday Times and Channel 4’s *Dispatches* programme disclosed that Brand was facing allegations of rape, sexual assault and emotional abuse. Brand denies the allegations and says all his relationships have been consensual.

The woman, whom the BBC called Olivia to protect her identity, was prompted to track down a recording of Brand’s remarks about the alleged incident, broadcast on *The Russell Brand Show* for Radio 2. Olivia claimed she answered the door to Brand and his team who were to record an episode of the show. She said she had walked past the studio on her way to the bathroom. As she crouched to get some medication she alleged that she turned to face a man’s crotch. “I was startled and I realised it was the man that I’d let in — Russell,” she told Iqbal.



Olivia claimed Brand told her: “Oh, I think you’re a bit all right.” Brand then allegedly told her that he would call her Betty. She told him that was not her name. Olivia told Iqbal he said: “‘Well, I’m gonna fuck you.’ And I said: ‘No, you’re not.’” She alleged that Brand pulled out his penis and “pretty much served it to me as you would be serving someone some food”.

Olivia claimed the bathroom door was closed and she felt trapped before Brand dressed himself and left.

Olivia said she texted a BBC employee in the office. He told her Brand was talking in the studio about the incident, according to Iqbal’s report. Brand has been approached for comment.

Olivia said she felt disgusted after listening to the recording. The episode, which was broadcast on June 21, 2008, features Brand’s co-host, Matt Morgan, saying: “It’s been 25 minutes since he showed his willy to a lady.” Brand laughs and replies: “Very easy to judge!”

Morgan adds: “He got told off for ringing a bell, minutes later he’s showing his willy.” Brand can be heard laughing. Olivia said she never made a complaint but had hoped someone from the BBC would contact her. She said she feared nobody would take her seriously and was worried about the impact on her family if she raised it.

She asked. “What made the BBC think that was appropriate? I don’t understand why they didn’t investigate this much sooner.”

Brand worked for Radio 2 from 2006 to 2008, when he resigned over the scandal in which he and Jonathan Ross left crude messages on the phone of Andrew Sachs, the actor, about Georgina Baillie, his granddaughter. Brand had been in a relationship with her.

Morgan said he stopped working for Brand “several years ago”. He added: “During the time I worked with him, I was never aware of any allegations of serious sexual misconduct against him. I absolutely condemn all forms of mistreatment of women. Looking back on the time I spent working on radio at the BBC, I am regretful to learn that a show I was part of made colleagues uncomfortable at times.

“I was not aware until now of the nature of this encounter. I have expressed my regret now looking back at the impact of the show, and this is a further example. The recent coverage has been very distressing to read and I reiterate my absolute condemnation of any form of mistreatment of women.”

A BBC official said: “We’re very sorry to hear of these allegations and we will look into them. We are conducting a review to look at allegations of this nature and if the woman who has shared her story is willing to speak to us, we would be very keen to hear from her. Further, the director-general has been very clear that some broadcasts from that period were, and are, inexcusable.”

The BBC response came as Chris Pavlovski, the owner of Rumble, a video platform that hosts Brand, criticised Dame Caroline Dineage for her “disturbing” inquiry about cutting off his income. He said none of the allegations related to comments on Rumble.

JASON MERRITT/FILM MAGIC/GETTY IMAGES



Russell Brand exposed himself in Los Angeles before recording a show for Radio 2 with Matt Morgan, left, a woman claimed in an interview with the BBC

Industry has problem with bad behaviour, says ITV boss

Alex Farber Media Correspondent

The chief executive of ITV has warned that more issues are likely to emerge after the Russell Brand scandal and called for “strong leaders and managers” to stamp out bad behaviour.

Dame Carolyn McCall said that the investigation by The Times, Sunday Times and Channel 4 had uncovered some “appalling” allegations about the former BBC Radio 2 star and host of *Big Brother* spin-off shows.

She told the Royal Television Society Cambridge convention she had no doubt that the industry had a problem with bad behaviour after Brand was accused by four women of allegations ranging from rape to sexual assault between 2006 and 2013. He has denied criminal wrongdoing and said all of his relationships were consensual.

“It’s a really serious issue,” McCall said. “There will be more to emerge, some will be historic and some current. And it won’t just be a problem for our industry, it is a problem for society.

“You have to have strong leaders and managers who will say ‘That’s not appropriate’, or ‘We have had a complaint and here’s what we will do about it’. Perhaps that has not happened enough because [it] has not come out enough. Anyone in government or anyone else that doesn’t think we are taking this incredibly seriously and will learn from it and act on it is not right.”

McCall identified the nature of the industry in which freelancers work on shows for short periods as a particular problem for television. “When you make programmes there are lots of people coming and going, which creates complications and complexities. We are looking at how we avoid this happening in future,” she said.

McCall added: “How do you ensure that people speak up, don’t feel intimidated and feel like they can talk to somebody. That is difficult to manage.”

ITV appointed an external investigator to look into the *This Morning* presenter Phillip Schofield’s “unwise but not illegal” relationship with a younger runner, which led to his resignation.

Last week McCall wrote to Lucy Frazer, the culture secretary, Dame Caroline Dinenage, chairwoman of the culture, media and sport select committee, and Dame Melanie Dawes, chief executive of Ofcom, to tell them the review would be finished this year.

Miliband: I regret interview — hindsight is a wonderful thing

Kieran Gair

Ed Miliband, the former Labour leader, said he regretted giving an interview to Russell Brand in the run-up to the 2015 election, after allegations of rape and sexual assault were made against the comedian.

Miliband, now the shadow climate secretary, appeared on Brand’s online show in April 2015 and argued that Brand was saying “what a number of people are thinking” about apathy and voting at the time.

Brand, 48, faces accusations of rape, sexual assault and emotional abuse in a period spanning seven years after an investigation by The Times, The Sunday Times and Channel 4’s *Dispatches*. He has denied the “very, very serious criminal allegations” and said all his sexual relationships have been consensual.

Miliband took part in an episode of the comedian’s web series, *The Trews*, to discuss young people and voting during the election campaign. Asked about the interview on Wednesday, he said, “I regret doing it”, but added he felt “duty-bound” at the time to counter Brand’s claims that voting had no impact.

He has not had any contact with Brand since then. At the time none of the allegations had been made public. At the height of his fame Brand, also an actor and TV presenter, had become outspoken about his left-wing political views and growing apathy about Westminster.

Asked at Politico’s Energy and Climate UK event whether he regretted the interview, Miliband said: “Yes, of course. I think the allegations that have come to light are horrific and my solidarity is with the women who have come forward to tell their stories.

“I did lots of interviews during that campaign. Russell Brand was going round saying people shouldn’t vote. I went and did an interview on his programme because I wanted young people to get out and vote. But obviously knowing what I know now, obviously I regret doing it.”



Going head to head on Russell Brand’s web series, The Trews, in 2015, the comedian and Ed Miliband disagreed over the value of voting

In the 15-minute interview Miliband insisted he would stand up to big businesses, discussed media ownership and disagreed with Brand over the value of voting.

Asked if agreeing to an interview with Brand showed a lack of judgment, Miliband said: “Look, hindsight is a wonderful thing. As I say, I did lots and lots of interviews. This was someone who was gaining notoriety at that point for saying to people, ‘Do not vote because it will make no difference.’ And I felt duty-bound, if there was an opportunity to do so, to say to young people in particular, who he was targeting … that it would make a difference.”

The pair spoke in the kitchen of Brand’s home in east London. At the end, Brand said: “We learnt a lot about Labour and a lot about Ed Miliband. I found it a very interesting experience.”

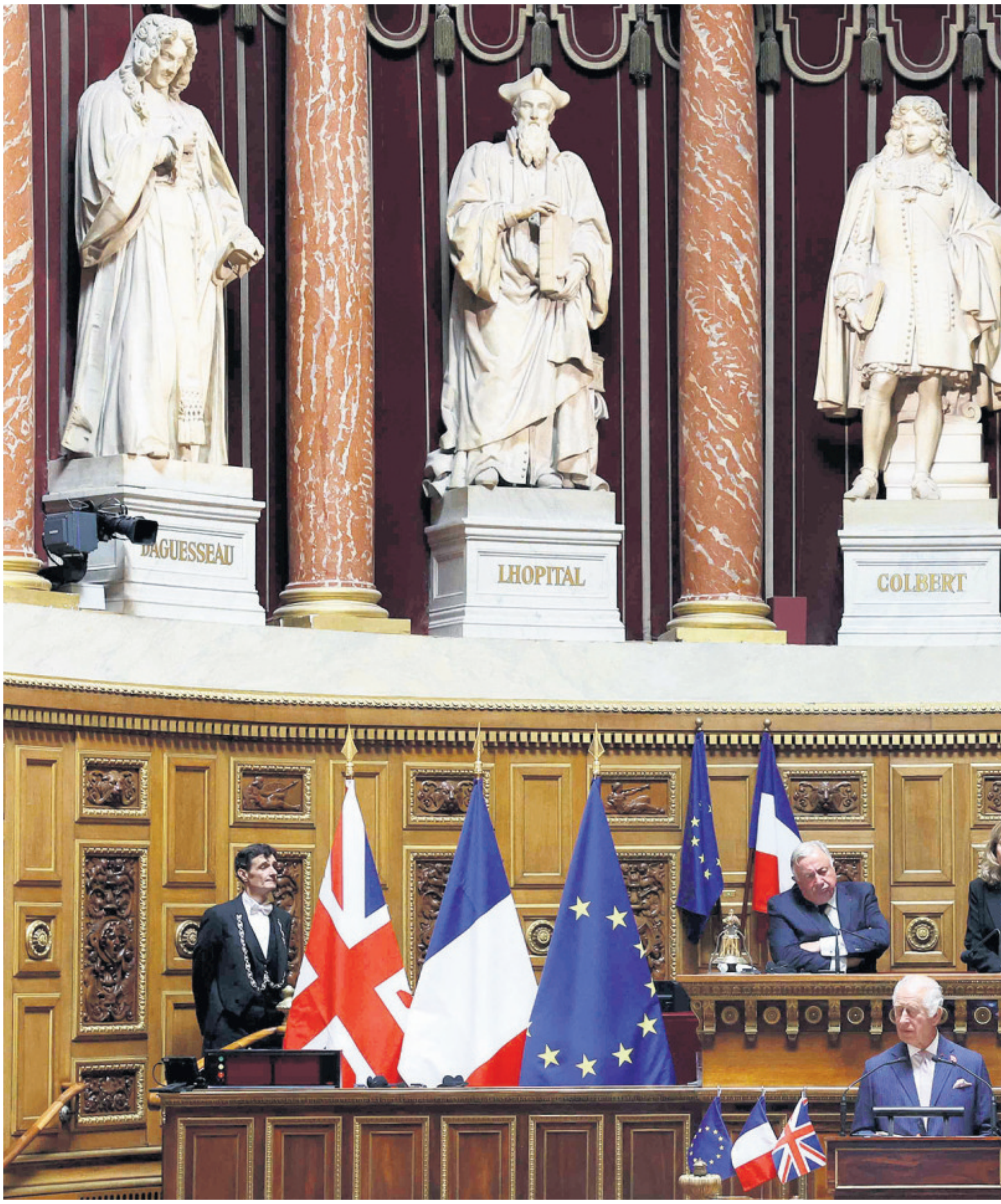
Miliband said at the time: “People criticise Russell Brand, and I don’t agree with his message, but what he’s saying, a number of people are thinking. Which is that politics doesn’t feel like it speaks to them.”

Labour frontbenchers have faced repeated questions about Miliband’s interview since the allegations against Brand were published and one party source said it wasn’t “fair” to have to explain an interview nearly ten years ago.





The King became the first member of the royal family to address senators and members of the national assembly in the chamber of the French Senate and was greeted with a standing ovation. He and the Queen also visited the Queen Elizabeth II flower market, named after Charles's mother during her visit to Paris in 2014



La République rises to the historic

Valentine Low Paris

It probably goes without saying that in all her many visits to France, the late Queen Elizabeth never once picked up a table tennis bat, let alone challenged the spouse of the French president to a game.

Times, however, have changed. Yesterday the King and Queen's state visit took on a sporting note when Camilla went up against President Macron's wife, Brigitte, during a visit to a community centre in St Denis in the north of Paris. Her challenge came as the couple were there to meet sports stars such as the former Chelsea footballer Didier Drogba and the French rugby prop Demba Bamba.

But, in the way of modern royals, the Queen is often up for a challenge, particularly one that will please the photographers who dog the couple's every working moment during their three-day state visit.

And so no sooner had she been invited to have a go at the table tennis — prompting some less than chivalrous laughter from the King — than she was inviting Mrs Macron to join her.

In other hands, this might have prompted a certain amount of Anglo-French rivalry. But over the past couple of days the two women have forged an obvious bond, and their brief bout was less a moment of diplomatic ping-pong than two women of a certain age — Mrs Macron is 70, while Camilla is 76 — simply enjoying themselves together.

Fortunately for the Queen, national prestige was not at stake: Mrs Macron was clearly the superior player, while the Queen merely seemed to have mastered the knack of hitting the ball into the net.

Meanwhile the King chatted with Bamba and the Welsh rugby player Dan Biggar, who said the King's visit had given France a lift.

Bamba added: "Everyone in France is enjoying the World Cup at the minute so it's great to have this visit now."

Later, on a visit to a nearby coffee shop to speak with representatives from Objectif Emploi, which helps vulnerable young people find work, the King greeted Parisian wellwishers who had been waiting in the rain for him. On a trip that has been noticeable for the warmth of the welcome extended to the King, not everyone was quite so pleased to see him: two people were escorted away by police officers after shouting as Charles walked around the town square.



President Macron and the King put in some work on the Entente Humoristique

He also met the Qatari businessman Nasser Al-Khelaifi, president of Paris St Germain football club, who presented the King with a shirt reading "Charles" and the number three on the back, which, no doubt, he will look forward to wearing while he does the gardening at Highgrove.

Charles's big moment had come earlier in the morning, when he gave his set piece speech to the French Senate. On a trip that had constant echoes of the previous visits by his mother, Charles was doing something that no British monarch had done before, by addressing French parliamentarians in the chamber of the Senate itself. The late Queen addressed the Senate in 2004, but in the Salle des Conférences.

As he took to the podium, with the standing ovation that had greeted him still ringing in his ears, perhaps the King had a moment to consider the significance of the date: the anniversary of the formation of the First Republic on September 21, 1792 — and, of course, the deposing of King Louis XVI, who came to an unfortunate end a few months later. These days, however, kings are welcome in the Senate (as long as they are someone else's).

In a speech that took in everything from Monet to Jacques-Yves Cousteau by way of General de Gaulle and the Second World War, the King spoke of the "fantastic spectacle" of the rugby World Cup, watched by tens of thousands of British rugby fans in France — "my son and daughter-in-law among them!"

Then, after talking about the Entente Cordiale, the agreement signed between France and Britain under Edward VII, he said: "For the time that is granted to me as King, I pledge to do whatever I can to strengthen the indispensable relationship between the

EMMANUEL DUNAND/AFP; SAMIR HUSSEIN/GETTY IMAGES; HANNAH MCKAY/REUTERS







The Queen showed that she was up for a sporting challenge and took on Brigitte Macron, the president's wife, at an impromptu game of table tennis during a visit to a community centre in St Denis, in the north of Paris. Far from putting on a display of Anglo-French rivalry, the two women seemed to have forged a close bond and were clearly enjoying themselves

occasion and fêtes the royal couple

United Kingdom and France — and, today, I invite you to join me in this endeavour. Together, our potential is limitless. Let us, therefore, cherish and nurture our entente cordiale. Let us renew it for future generations so that, I would like to propose, it also becomes an Entente pour la Durabilité — in order to tackle the global climate and biodiversity emergency more effectively. A commitment to each other, and to the values we so proudly share; a commitment inspired by the example of the past, and emboldened to grapple with the immense challenges in the world around us."

While the King was at the Senate, the Queen was launching a new Franco-British literary prize with her new best friend Mrs Macron at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France. If the King was going to give the bulk of his speech in his (perfectly serviceable) French, the Queen was not to be outdone, giving her longest speech to date in what she described as her "rusty" French.

The Entente Littéraire Prize, which was launched at a reception attended by leading literary figures from both countries including Sebastian Faulks, will recognise Young Adult (YA) Fiction and allow British and French citizens to share joint literary experiences, "reinforcing cultural ties whilst celebrating the joys of reading".

She said: "I very much hope that this prize will go a long way to proving that Victor Hugo was unfair to us when he said, 'L'Angleterre a deux livres', 'England has two books' — as dearly as we value the Bible and Shakespeare, I promise that we have many more than two, as the esteemed authors gathered here demonstrate… And, just as in France, our writers every year create new masterpieces which this prize aims to celebrate."

The Queen, who also met a group of women who were the survivors of domestic abuse, was back with her husband for their visit to the flower market that was named after the late Queen. Lionel Vivani, who has operated his stall for 25 years, told the King how he showed his mother round the market during her last state visit to France in 2014. "It was an honour to meet your King," he said afterwards. "I have fond memories of meeting the Queen nearly ten years ago and I'm glad I am still here for this visit."

The King's speech wins top marks for effort

Adam Sage Paris

Since taking the throne a year ago, King Charles has constantly found himself compared to his late mother.

And with a high-profile state visit to France and Queen Elizabeth's flawless French, it was inevitable that the British monarch's linguistic skills would be in the spotlight this week.

But, with a few misgivings about his accent — one expert likened it to sounding like someone speaking with a sore throat — Charles seems to have overcome the language barrier.

The King impressed locals with his grasp of their language during his cross-Channel visit, using a mixture of French and English in his speeches at the state banquet at the Palace of Versailles on Wednesday and to parliamentarians at the Senate yesterday.

Listeners said his pronunciation was understandable, albeit tinged with a British accent that many found charming. One newspaper, La Voix du Nord, even asked: "Pourquoi le roi parle-t-il aussi bien Français?" (Why does the King speak French so well?), and, inevitably compared his French to his mother's and the Queen Mother, who was apparently fluent in French.

But even if his language skills had been incomprehensible, it would probably have been appreciated.

In an era of globalisation dominated by English, the French are mostly happy for almost anyone to speak their language. Charles's use was viewed as a mark of friendship that could help to seal a post-Brexit cross-Channel reconciliation. He learnt French at Gordonstoun, the Scottish boarding school, getting a C at A level. He made 34 official visits to France as Prince of Wales.

Stéphane Bern, the presenter of history documentaries on television and a fervent observer of the British royal family, said: "King Charles speaks French very well. He speaks it with an accent that I myself find more pronounced than that of his mother… who spoke absolutely perfect French, almost without an accent."

Charles's speeches were grammatically flawless. The assumption in Paris was they had been checked and corrected by native French speakers.

Ségolène Forgar, a journalist at Madame Figaro magazine, who is covering the royal visit, said: "You can see he is at ease in French and that he speaks it very well, although with a pronounced accent." She said that when Charles pronounced the letter "r", he sounded like he had a sore throat, although she added this was typical of the British way of speaking French.

Forgar was keen to point out that Charles's English accent was no handicap. Unlike the American accent, she said the British one was "charming". Charles' was "elegant and chic", she said.

Commentators said parliamentarians had been enthused by the message of Franco-British friendship but also by Charles's use of French. "We are so used to everything being said in English that we are proud to hear [the King] speak French," said Forgar.

News

Editors take aim at proposal to bar reporters from covering rape trials

Shayma Bakht

Proposals to bar journalists from reporting on rape and sexual abuse trials have been condemned as "devastating" and "unworkable".

The Law Commission claimed that the move could "increase confidence" among victims but it was criticised by rape survivors and the media as a chilling move that could limit reporting of sex offences and risked trials being "shrouded in secrecy".

The Society of Editors, which is made up of more than 400 senior members of the media, said the commission's public consultation, which proposed yesterday that journalists should be restricted from court when sex offence victims were giving evidence, was "likely to further reduce, rather than enhance, both the public's confidence and the reporting of sexual offence cases generally".

The proposal, which has also been opposed by the Crime Reporters Association, and will take public responses until September 29, claims it will allow for complainants to "present evidence relevant to their defence without causing unnecessary trauma".

But Dawn Alford, the executive director of the Society of Editors, said the consultation came "at a time when public confidence in the police and judicial system is already low, placing additional restrictions on the media's ability to report on how decisions are made".

It is estimated that only one in six victims of sexual assault will report a crime and less than 1 per cent of reported cases end in a conviction. Among those, few are jailed.

Ellie Wilson, 25, waived her anonymity to campaign on behalf of victims for better transparency in courts, after Daniel McFarlane was convicted of raping her twice between December 2017 and February 2018.

Wilson gave evidence in a closed court, where members of the public were excluded but journalists were allowed in. While she agrees with the consultation's decision that "the public should not be allowed to be present when rape victims give evidence — especially if the family of rapists could be in the room", Wilson argues more needs to be done to "lift the veil of secrecy around courts".

Wilson sought crowdfunding to make a complaint against the defending barrister in her trial in Scotland, whom she described as "putting [her] through an awful experience that was belittling and traumatic".

While only one court reporter was present while she gave evidence, Wilson said "having more present, depending on the journalists, could have stopped the aggressive behaviour" that had been directed towards her.

"Journalists do serve a useful purpose in court," Wilson said. "They make sure people think about what they say and are abiding by the rules because they will report on those details."

Wilson needed a copy of the court transcript, which cost £3,000 plus VAT, to raise a complaint. She is now campaigning to abolish the expense for victims of crime, adding that "it continues to perpetrate the secrecy around the court — and secrecy can enable and embolden aggressive or inappropriate behaviour because there is no accountability".

An attack on transparent justice, Thunderer, page 28

Let parents know about trans children, NHS tells schools

Nicola Woolcock Education Editor

NHS training instructions say that schools should not allow children to socially transition their gender without their parents' consent.

A new module for school staff on how they should respond to those exploring their gender identity says that supporting a transition without family approval can create "complex difficulties" and "is not recommended".

Schools in England are still waiting for official guidance, promised by Rishi Sunak, which was supposed to be published by the end of the summer term.

NHS England said the training resources were developed independently of the Department for Education and were not intended to influence policy, The Guardian reported. It said the course stated: "Secrets between parents or carers and their children are problematic and are likely to create further issues in the future."

Some ministers and MPs have been pushing for a legal ban on children socially transitioning, even with their parents' support.

Geoff Barton, head of the Association of School and College Leaders, said it was important for the NHS and DfE guidance to be consistent. Last week Rachel de Souza, the children's commissioner for England, said schools were "crying out" for guidance.

Quintagram® No 1740

Solve all five concise clues using each letter underneath once only

1 Fixate, preoccupy (6)

_ _ _ _ _ _

2 Face, countenance (6)

_ _ _ _ _ _

3 Moon of Jupiter (6)

_ _ _ _ _ _

4 Negligent (6)

_ _ _ _ _ _

5 Distinctly defined (5-3)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

A	A	A	B	C	C	E	E
E	E	E	G	I	I	L	M
O	O	P	R	R	R	S	S
S	S	S	S	T	U	U	V

Solutions see T2 MindGames p15
Cryptic clues T2 MindGames p14

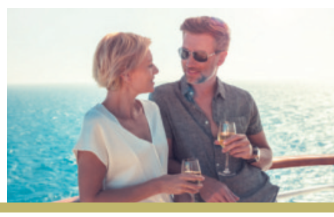
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Bulgarian beautician ‘spied for Russia’

Billy Kenber, Tom Saunders

A 29-year-old beautician is one of five Bulgarians charged with spying for Russia. Vanya Gaberova, who owns a nail and eyelash beauty salon in Acton, west London, and four compatriots are accused of being part of a spy ring suspected of conducting surveillance in the UK and mainland Europe and passing information to the Russian state.

Gaberova and her compatriots, Ivan Stoyanov, 31, Orlin Roussev, 45, Bizer Dzhambazov, 41, and Katrin Ivanova, 31, will appear at Westminster magistrates' court on Tuesday to face charges of conspiring to gather information that would be useful to an enemy of the state between August 2020 and February 2023.

Roussev was the alleged ringleader while Dzhambazov and Ivanova, who were in a relationship, had previously been charged with possessing 19 fake passports and other identity documents with “improper intention”.

They included documents for the UK, Bulgaria, France, Italy and other countries allegedly made by Roussev. All three have yet to enter pleas to that charge and are due to face trial next year.

The three men and two women had all lived in Britain for several years and were arrested in February. They are accused of posing as journalists and carrying out alleged surveillance operations in the UK, Germany and Montenegro.

Gaberova and Styanov, who was living in Greenford, west London, were named as part of the alleged conspiracy for the first time yesterday.

The 29-year-old beautician ran a west London beauty salon called Pretty Woman and lived with her boyfriend, a decorator, in a nearby flat. The business was opened in 2019 and the company's accounts show that it received a £10,000 coronavirus grant as well as a £10,000 bounce-back loan from the British government.

Certificates on the wall of the salon show Gaberova had taken part in several eyebrow extension competitions in London and Bulgaria as well as an online-only contest in Russia.

An employee said she was not aware of Gaberova's alleged involvement in espionage until it was reported in a news bulletin. “I knew she was somewhere,” the woman said. “But I didn't know the reason.”

Tiago Nogueira, who runs a Portuguese restaurant over the road from Gaberova's salon, said he believed that she had previously lived in Portugal “for two years”. He added that she “knew a few Portuguese words”. He said that she was renting the salon “and would leave her staff to do other stuff”.

Roussev, who is suspected of acting as a link between the group and those who received the intelligence, had previously owned a business involved in signals intelligence — the interception of communications. He was once an adviser to the Bulgarian ministry of energy and moved to the UK in 2009.

Roussev was living in a seaside hotel in Great Yarmouth, Norfolk, when he was arrested.

Dzhambazov and Ivanova were living in Harrow, northwest London, where he worked as a medical courier and she was a lab assistant. The couple had previously set up a community organisation to help Bulgarians living overseas and were also involved in helping to facilitate those living in the UK to vote in their country's elections.

The charges follow an investigation by the Metropolitan Police.

Nick Price, head of the Crown Prosecution Service special crime and counterterrorism division, said: “The CPS has authorised a charge of conspiracy to conduct espionage against three men and two women suspected of spying for Russia.” They would be charged with “conspiring to collect information intended to be directly or indirectly useful to an enemy for a purpose prejudicial to the safety and interest of the state between 30 August 2020 and 8 February 2023”.









Vanya Gaberova entered beauty contests in London and Bulgaria. She was accused of spying along with Bizer Dzhambazov, top, Katrin Ivanova and Orlin Roussev

Dog attack costs media boss £10,000

Debbie White

The former media mogul Richard Desmond has been fined £10,000 after his German shepherd wounded two people in an attack in north London.

Desmond, who once owned the Daily Express, the Daily Star and OK! Magazine, admitted two offences under the 1991 Dangerous Dogs Act at Willesden magistrates' court.

In addition to being fined, Desmond was ordered to muzzle his dog when in public places.

The court was told that his pet, named Summer, was “dangerously out of control” on March 30 this year, the Evening Standard reported.

Carl Allen and Mark Webber were injured when they were mauled in The Bishops Avenue in Hampstead — known as “Billionaire's Row”.

Desmond, 71, was also warned that should his pet attack again, it risked being “destroyed”.

Martin Edwards, for the prosecution, said that Allen and Webber, who had been working in the area, suffered puncture wounds during the attack.

In a statement read to the court, Allen said: “The dog chased me and I called the police. It has bitten me through my work trousers.”

The trauma had resulted in him feeling concerned about visiting addresses for work in case another “dog attacked him again”, the court was told.

Allen said in his evidence that he had asked Desmond: “Can you keep your dog under control — he bit me.”

The court was told that Desmond allegedly replied: “No, he didn't.”

Webber, a tree surgeon, said in his statement: “The dog lunged at me — I got a puncture wound to my leg.”

The men had been working when the dog suddenly attacked them, they said.

Philip Evans KC, Desmond's defence counsel, said the dog had been “startled” prior to the attack — possibly by the noise of a sliding van door.

Evans said that Desmond accepted “full responsibility” for Summer's actions.

He added: “He is a man of thoroughly good character, there have been no other incidents involving Summer. There is considerable evidence he has taken this seriously.” Before Desmond was fined, Evans also told the court that his client was “a man of some means”.

Mark Jabbitt, the magistrate, told Desmond: “I accept you are a prominent businessman and philanthropist, but you are responsible for your dog. There was a lapse in judgment.

“You have exercised responsible leadership since then. It does merit a fine. For each of the offences there will be a fine of £5,000.”

The magistrate warned that if Desmond did not comply with his order to muzzle Summer in public places, and his dog carried out a further attack, its life would be “in peril”.

He ordered Desmond to pay £1,000 in compensation to each man, a £2,000 victim surcharge and £85 in court costs.

Children injured as bus roof gets ripped off in tree crash

Five children were injured yesterday when their school bus crashed into a tree and its roof was ripped off.

Essex police said emergency services were called to Clavering, a village about 20 miles south of Cambridge, at approximately 8.15am. The pupils, aged 11 to 18, were being taken to Joyce Frankland Academy, in Newport, when the bus hit the heavy bough of a tree.

Children dived for cover as the roof was sheared off. Three pupils were treated at the scene and two were taken to Addenbrooke's Hospital with what are believed to be minor injuries.

A spokesman for Essex fire and rescue service said that nobody was trapped in the vehicle and firefighters cleared the road by 9am.

The East of England ambulance service said that an air ambulance and nine vehicles were sent to the scene.

Joyce Frankland Academy said in a statement that the police and ambulance services managed the situation. “We are aware that some students have been taken to A&E and minor injuries by their parents to have some cuts and grazes looked at,” the school added.

A minibus was called to bring the children to school. The academy said: “While most students appear to be OK, we know that this could have been a traumatic experience. Therefore we have made arrangements in school to provide a space for anyone who may be in shock or upset by the events.

“Thank you to all students and parents for the calm manner in which they helped to handle the situation.”

The school said on its website that the bus was transporting its pupils and also children from Saffron Walden County High School.

Police closed the road while the incident was dealt with.

News Politics

Most new cars must be electric

Chris Smyth Whitehall Editor

Most new cars will still have to be electric by 2030 despite a delay on banning petrol sales, as Rishi Sunak attempts to reassure industry.

The prime minister has told manufacturers that he will introduce annual legal targets for electric vehicle sales beginning next year to give certainty about investment decisions.

Sunak pushed back the end of new petrol and diesel sales from 2030 to 2035 this week, saying that while he supported the shift to electric cars, "it should be you the consumer that makes that choice, not government forcing you to do it".

Yesterday he denied slowing down efforts to fight climate change, saying Margaret Thatcher "would have agreed" with his plans to reduce costs on households. He criticised people approaching climate issues with "ideological zeal where they just don't care about the impact on families" as he faced down resistance to his relaxation of the transition away from petrol and diesel cars and gas boilers.

"People have asserted these targets without having an honest conversation about what's required to deliver them," he told BBC Radio 4's *Today*. "Transitioning to net zero isn't going to be easy — it's going to require all of us to make changes in how we live our lives."

Insisting that he would be "undeterred" by criticism, Sunak said Britain remained on track to hit "all our international and domestic targets" on emissions reductions. He challenged critics to "explain to the country why they think it's right that ordinary families up and down the country should have to fork out £5, 10, £15,000 to make the transition earlier than is necessary."

Chris Stark, chief executive of the Climate Change Committee, said the government had "moved backwards" on its commitments and was "doing less", saying that emissions goals "will be even harder to hit with this softer package".

However, pressing ahead with mandatory quotas for electric car sales will blunt the impact of Sunak's delay to the petrol ban, with 80 per cent of all new cars still required to be electric in 2030.

The policy means that the main impact of Sunak's change to "ease" the shift to electric vehicles will be to allow about 20 per cent of new cars to be petrol or diesel between 2030 and 2035, rather than 20 per cent being hybrid under previous plans. Sunak stressed that "multiple car" manufacturers had welcomed his changes after he reassured them that a long-planned "zero-emissions mandate" would go ahead.

From January about 22 per cent of new cars will have to be electric, slightly up on this year, a figure that climbs every year to 80 per cent by 2030.

Carmakers will face fines if they do not sell enough electric vehicles under the mandate, but most of the industry had called for the rules to go ahead after investing billions in green technology and securing concessions about how they are applied. Many car companies believe the rules will ensure a big enough market for electric cars and spur investment in charge point infrastructure.

Sunak said in Downing Street on Wednesday that his changes would not undermine business stability, adding: "What the auto industry wants us to deliver — which we will now be able to — is our mandate to get from here to there." He said that "2035 is one aspect of it but between now and then we are going to make progress in transitioning to electric vehicles, and we're working with industry put in place the pathway to get there that they are incredibly supportive of".

Eighty per cent of new car sales had to be electric by 2030, according to draft targets, and Kemi Badenoch, the business secretary, said yesterday that figure had not changed. "We did have a mandate for a 100 per cent ban by 2030. It's now [an] 80 per cent target by 2030 and then the full ban by 2035," she told GB News.

She said the car industry "don't all speak with one voice" after companies such as Jaguar Land Rover reacted more positively to the change of course.

Jaguar Land Rover, which recently announced plans for a £4 billion electric vehicle battery plant in Somerset, praised "certainty around legislation for the end of sale of petrol and diesel-powered cars" as annual targets go ahead.

Toyota, which had been pushing for sales of hybrids to continue beyond 2030, said Sunak's decision "recognises that all low-emission and affordable technologies can have a role to play in a pragmatic vehicle transition".

Climate climbdown, letters, page 30
Critical scrutiny in short supply, leading article, page 31

Critic's words 'are a bit rich'

Geraldine Scott Political Reporter

Kemi Badenoch has suggested that one of Rishi Sunak's critics is too rich to understand how net zero policies would hit households financially.

The business secretary said that Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park, a former Foreign Office minister, had "way more money than pretty much everyone in the UK", as she emphasised that the prime minister's plan was "right for the UK".

Sunak said he had changed his approach on net zero because of the cost to households.

Goldsmith, who resigned in June over government "apathy" towards climate issues, was among several high-profile Conservatives who criticised the move.

The peer, 48, went so far as to demand an election.

Asked about his comments, Badenoch told LBC: "Zac Goldsmith is someone who cares very much about the environment, he is a friend of mine. But the fact is, he has way more money than pretty much everyone in the UK.

"This is not how we make decisions, we need to make decisions based on what the facts are."

Asked whether the prime minister was also out of touch because of his wealth, the business secretary said: "They are doing quite different things.

"The point I am making is that Zac Goldsmith is one person who has one opinion … the key thing is that you can't cherry-pick comments and say they are reflective of the entire Conservative Party.

"That is just simply not the case."



Plan "right for the UK", Kemi Badenoch said



Rishi Sunak meets Kate Watson and Ruby Holland during sheep drenching at

Carbon wishlist committed £160bn

Chris Smyth Whitehall Editor

It took only 16 words and 17 minutes to commit Britain to spending £160 billion on going carbon neutral.

Britain's sixth carbon budget was singled out by Rishi Sunak as he criticised previous governments for trying to reach net zero "simply by wishing it".

Under the 2008 Climate Change Act, ministers are required to set legally binding five-year caps on carbon emissions. Britain has met its first two budgets and is on track for its third and fourth, leading up to 2027.

But it was the more ambitious targets in the sixth budget, covering 2033-37, that worried Sunak. "It was the carbon equivalent of promising to boost government spending with no way to pay for it," he said this week. "The last carbon budget process was debated in the House of Commons for just 17 minutes and voted through with barely any consideration given to the hard choices needed to fulfil it."

On a day in June 2021 when MPs spent an hour and a half debating grouse-shooting, it took less than a quarter of that time to pass an order saying: "The carbon budget for the 2033-2037 budgetary period is 965,000,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent."

The limit had been set earlier that year by Boris Johnson, who boasted it was "the most ambitious target to cut emissions in the world". It was announced as Johnson, who was prime minister at the time, flew to the US for an Earth Day summit with President Biden as Britain prepared to host the Cop26 climate conference later that year in Glasgow.

The goal of reducing Britain's emissions by 78 per cent on 1990 levels had been set on the advice of the official Climate Change Committee. It represented a dramatic speeding up of Britain's climate goals. Before Theresa May pledged in 2019 to reach net zero by 2050, Britain had aimed to cut emissions by 80 per cent by the middle of the century. The new target was to get there more than a decade earlier.

The committee set the goal on the basis that "the UK is in a position to influence others" as president of both Cop and the G7 in 2021, arguing that reductions required were similar to those achieved annually since 2012. The costs, it estimated, would be "low, equivalent to less than 1 per cent of GDP" — or about £25 billion a year.

Sunak never seemed convinced. As chancellor, he wrote to colleagues warning them of the "profound financial and delivery consequences" of such a target. In a letter seen by The Times, he wrote that the additional costs of the higher target could be "£130 to 160 billion", or £40-55 billion a year.

Although he did not dissent, Sunak warned MP: "Ultimately, whether it is through the cost of living, taxes or the need to spend money on new equipment, these costs will fall to households."

Behind the story

Binmaggedon has been averted. The steak surcharge has been cancelled. The easyJet excess has been excised.

Rishi Sunak promised that when it came to meat and flying taxes, as well as a "government diktat" to force households to use seven bins, "I've scrapped it" (Tom Whipple and Adam Vaughan write).

There was only one issue: according to his critics — and his own civil servants — no one was seriously proposing any of those policies. There was nothing to scrap.

As the Department for the Environment said in a statement sent to waste management companies, "whilst it was never the case that seven bins would be needed by households, this new plan ensures it".

In his speech watering down Britain's net zero policies, the prime minister said: "The debate about how we get to net zero has thrown up a range of worrying proposals and today I want to confirm that under this government, they'll never happen."

Chris Stark, the chief executive of the Climate Change Committee, which advises the government on its climate targets, said that these were "straw men suggestions".

Lord Goldsmith, the former environment minister, accused Sunak of "pretending to halt frightening proposals that simply do not exist".

The idea of a meat tax was explicitly ruled out by the government before George Eustice stepped down as environment secretary last year. The committee has not proposed a frequent flyer tax, though last year it did say that demand for flights could be curbed by changes to taxation, such as reversing the 2021 cut in air

by 2030 despite petrol ban delay

ALASTAIR GRANT/AP



Writtle University College, Essex, yesterday, after earlier playing down criticism of his repositioning on green policies

passenger duty. The reference to seven bins relates to the proposed Consistency in Recycling scheme, which would require councils to separate food, paper, glass, metal, general waste, garden waste and plastic. However, some of the types could be separated at the waste plant rather than at the householder's gate.

Dr Adam Read, of Suez, one of Britain's biggest waste management firms, said: "The seven bins idea got thrown out a long time ago. It's a bit of a red herring, but it was an easy win for the PM last night."

A new plan called Simpler Recycling is on the way anyway, industry figures said.

Lee Marshall, policy director at the Chartered Institution of Wastes Management, said: "It is probably a first to have a prime minister scrap a policy that hasn't been implemented and was never proposed in the first place."

Green case they should have made ten years ago

Paul Goodman
Comment

The three legs of the stool that supports energy policy are increasing security, reducing emissions and helping consumers. As he tore up the cross-party consensus on net zero yesterday — the most startling development of his brief premiership — Rishi Sunak had an answer for his critics about each of them.

On security, he reiterated his case for offshore and onshore wind, new modular nuclear stations and new North Sea oil and gas. For consumers, he argued that moving the ban on new and pure petrol and diesel vehicles back to 2035, and pushing the bar on gas boiler installation and off-grid oil boilers back to the same date, would save money. (The Boiler Upgrade Scheme, which gives people cash grants to replace boilers, will be increased by 50 per cent.)

On emissions, his pitch was that if consent for net zero collapses, then so will public support for reductions. And he had a sweetener for nervous, greenish opinion: "We're investing billions in new energy projects, yet we don't have the grid infrastructure to bring that power to households and businesses. Right now, it can take 14 years to build new grid infrastructure. There are enough projects waiting to be connected to generate over half of our future electricity needs." So the government will reform planning to speed "the most nationally significant projects".

The prime minister's opponents have counter-arguments on each point but, even on the effects of chopping and changing targets on business confidence and certainty, he isn't alone. While Ford described the 2030 target as "a vital catalyst", Toyota welcomed the announcement and BMW said its plans would not change.

And although some of Sunak's detail was dubious (he over-egged, as it were, the threat of a meat ban), he was making a big, powerful, distinctly conservative and, in his own word, "sensible" green case of the kind that Conservatives should have made at least ten years ago, before Theresa May gifted net zero as a legacy project, Boris Johnson did a big switcheroo from climate change scepticism and Liz Truss appointed Chris Skidmore to review net zero.

As Sunak pointed out, the 2035 date for ending the sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles puts us in the same place as such comparable European countries as France and Germany, Anglosphere countries such as Australia and Canada, and US states such as California and New York "and still ahead of the rest of America". He might have added that this date is five years earlier than that Johnson originally had after the 2019 election.

All of this will be lost on his opponents — as will the careful triangulation he attempted between climate change fanaticism and rejectionism. Centre-right greens will think he went too far; right-wing opponents, not far enough. An ascendancy of bigger business, its suppliers, charities, lobby groups and academics will oppose Sunak.

As will the elements of the Civil Service believed by insiders to have leaked his plans, leaving him little option other than to rush out his speech before Downing Street could try to drum up support. Sunak's green revolution powered less by targets than technology will be new to most voters. With so many voices against, won't his be drowned out?

My take is that while in one sense the timing of Sunak's change of gear is good — in that it's never wrong to make the right argument — in another it's terrible, because the best time to do so is going into opposition, with four years to develop your case, rather than three years in to a fourth term of government. Furthermore, he risks his case being written off as tactics, rather than strategy — a cynical gambit to put Labour on the spot after the Ulez row.

No 10 is well aware that if the next election is framed as Conservative v Labour, then the latter will win, if only because voters believe that the former have had their time. But if it comes to be seen as Change v Sir Keir Starmer, then Downing Street hopes the terms of trade will change. "I have made my decision: we are going to change," Sunak said yesterday. "And over the coming months, I will set out a series of long-term decisions to deliver that change."

This is risky. Support for the net-zero consensus is highly concentrated, articulate and deeply felt, especially among younger people, and to date has been entrenched in polling. And if the Uxbridge & South Ruislip by-election proved that the nearer the target, the bigger the opposition, then opposition to the status quo may be dispersed and diffuse.

So the change that the prime minister championed yesterday may have been proclaimed too late — at least if enough minds are to be changed before the next election. Nonetheless, he may find comfort in YouGov's snap poll: by 50 to 34 per cent, Britons support the proposal to push back the ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel cars to 2035.

Has the consensus misread, if not perhaps the width of public support for net zero, then its depth? And if Sunak isn't prepared to take risks, what's the point of him? I asked last winter: is he a politician? And recently, put another way: who is he? Perhaps we are finally beginning to see the answer. Maybe he's no more



Rishi Sunak is filling up on hope of an election victory many think is unlikely

or less than some have said — at heart, a conventional, business-friendly Tory with an old-fashioned Asian take on family values.

And as he's started (almost a year late, some will doubtless say), he must continue, through possible resignations, brickbats from former leaders, and certain lawfare. "The Climate Change Committee have rightly said you don't reach net zero simply by wishing it," he said. "Yet that's precisely what previous governments have done — both Labour and Conservative. Let me repeat and italicise those last two words: *and Conservative.*

In so saying, this ultra-cautious party manager, whose sole gambit of note to date was the Windsor Agreement, ripped up not just the climate change consensus but his own rule book. I suggested in July that the prime minister might present himself to the coming Tory conference as "a new kid on the block" who has had "a year to look under the bonnet" and confides to those listening that "what I've found isn't pretty".

"I have spent my first year bringing back stability to our economy, your government, and our country," he said. "And now it is time to address the bigger, longer-term questions we face. The real choice is do we really want to change our country and build a better future, or do we want to carry on as we are?"

Hence his stress, in an echo of David Cameron and George Osborne's "long-term economic plan", of "long-term decisions to deliver change". Here, clearly, is his key message for the next election. It worked against the odds in 2015. Those odds are much longer now. Can history really repeat itself this time round?

Paul Goodman is the editor of Conservative Home


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Skydiver's fairytale landing on a unicorn

A skydiver delighted onlookers by landing on top of an inflatable unicorn in a display of skilled precision (Katie Gibbons writes).

Jan Zackl was the only skydiver who managed the feat during a competition at a skydive centre in Langar, Nottinghamshire.

Zackl, 32, an instructor at Skydive Langar who has been jumping out of planes for seven years, said fast landings now gave him the biggest thrill.

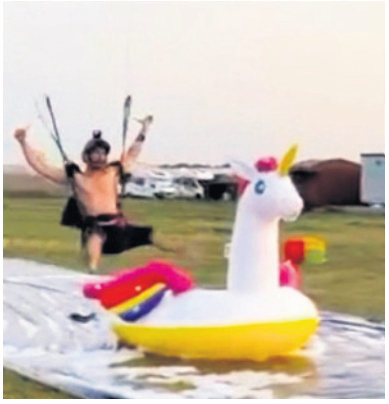
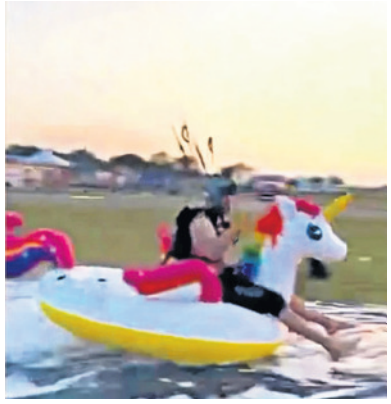
"The first time you jump out of a plane, the feeling of falling through the air is brilliant, but you do become used to it. For me landing at speed is the top thing I like to do, that's the fun part," he said.

The video clip shows Zackl descending in his parachute at high speed as the sun sets in Langar.

He then makes a quick turn to line up with a wet plastic sheet on the ground, known as a slip'n'slide, on which the inflatable toy is positioned. Zackl can be heard shouting "I'm coming for ya" before landing on top of the unicorn and sliding down the tarpaulin. After mastering the challenge, he jumped up to celebrate as the crowd watching him cheered and clapped.

However, it was his second go at the tricky landing as his initial attempt "didn't quite go to plan", he said.

Zackl, who is originally from the Czech Republic, works full time as an instructor at the skydiving school.

Skydiving instructor Jan Zackl mastered the challenge of landing on an inflatable unicorn during a competition at Skydive Langar centre in Nottinghamshire

Terror suspect pleads not guilty to prison escape

David Brown, Peter Chappell

A suspected spy accused of fleeing prison by using sheets to strap himself underneath a delivery lorry appeared in court yesterday and denied unlawful escape.

Daniel Khalife, 21, appeared at the Old Bailey via video link from the high-security Belmarsh prison to plead not guilty of escaping from HMP Wandsworth. He was wearing a blue and yellow prison uniform.



Daniel Khalife's trial is set to start on November 13

Police have previously said that a member of the public reported seeing a man matching Khalife's description walking away from a food delivery van that had left Wandsworth prison in south London on September 6. The former soldier was arrested on a canal towpath in northwest London four days later after a massive police search.

He denied one charge of escape, saying: "I am not guilty."

Khalife had been in Wandsworth awaiting trial after allegedly planting a fake bomb at a Royal Signals barracks in Stafford and gathering information that might be useful to terrorists or enemies of the UK.

He denied those charges at a hearing at the Old Bailey in July.

His mother, Farnaz Khalife, 47, said that she had heard reports of him leaving prison while she was on the way to visit her daughter.

She had split from his father, Abed, when Daniel was young and brought him and his twin sister up alone. She now lives in Wales.

"I was just getting back to Teddington [southwest London] and I got off the bus and opened my phone. His name came up. I didn't read the whole thing, I thought he must have killed himself, I was shaking. I had a panic attack and then I sat down and opened my phone and read the whole thing."

Mr Justice Baker said that Khalife, who left school at 16 and joined the army, would face trial on the escape charge along with previous charges of obtaining information useful to the enemy, eliciting information about members of the armed forces contrary to the Terrorism Act 2000, and perpetrating a bomb hoax.

A trial is due to start at Woolwich crown court on November 13. A further hearing will be held at the Old Bailey on October 13.

AI can detect sewage fungus

Niall Jeffrey

Scientists have developed an early warning system that can detect one of the biggest menaces to Britain's rivers.

Sewage fungus is triggered by pollution and takes the form of slimy filaments of bacteria and other microorganisms. These masses can often be seen clinging to river beds and can choke river ecosystems. Deveveloped by researchers from the University of Oxford, the artificial intelligence system was calibrated to detect tiny filaments of sewage fungus — too small to be seen by eye — before they became visible.

The research, published in the journal Global Change Biology, found that levels of sewage pollution in a river were the best predictor of how much fungus would appear. Agricultural pollution was not as closely linked.



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SWNS



Bit of a squash Giant pumpkins leave just enough room for eight-month-old Celyn Bailey, from Cardiff, at the Malvern Autumn Show, which runs until Sunday

Army is using tanks made with asbestos

George Grylls Defence Correspondent

Hundreds of Army tanks and armoured vehicles could contain asbestos, the Ministry of Defence says.

Ministers confirmed that Challenger 2 tanks, Warrior infantry fighting vehicles and Bulldog armoured personnel carriers, all of which are still in use, have asbestos-containing materials (ACMs).

Asbestos was used in the 20th century in the construction of tanks, ships and planes. The naturally occurring material breaks down into tiny fibres when disturbed and prolonged exposure can lead to incurable lung damage. Symptoms of asbestosis — a severe scarring of the lungs, or mesothelioma, a cancer — can occur years after exposure to asbestos.

In total, 2,699 pieces of army equipment contain ACMs. These include: 765 Bulldog armoured personnel carriers, 324 Challenger 2 tanks, 75 Challenger armoured repair and recovery vehicles, 11 Fuchs armoured vehicles, 14 Gazelle reconnaissance helicopters, 31 high mobility trailers, 841 Pinzgauer 4x4s, 64 Stormer armoured vehicles, 540 Warrior infantry fighting vehicles and 34 Wildcat helicopters.

The figures represent the entire MoD inventory of kit containing asbestos, with the numbers in front line service much lower. They were confirmed in a letter to Labour by James Cartlidge, defence procurement minister.

John Healey, the shadow defence secretary, said: "The scale of asbestos in British Army equipment is a serious concern. After 13 years the Conservatives have still failed to fix the defence procurement system, which the public accounts committee describes as 'broken and wasting taxpayers money'.

"Our armed forces are forced to rely on ageing and asbestos-riddled equipment. Labour will ensure they have the kit they need to fight with confidence and fulfil our Nato obligations."

General Sir Patrick Sanders, chief of the general staff, said the army was still fielding vehicles dating back to the 1960s and likened it to using "rotary dial telephones in an iPhone age".

The MoD said: "These figures represent only a worst-case scenario and much of the equipment referenced will already be out of service, unaffected by asbestos, or has had asbestos-containing materials removed. The presence of asbestos-containing materials in itself does not create a health risk and equipment containing asbestos above statutory limits can only be operated by specialists."

'Oldest shop in UK' up for sale

Jack Blackburn History Correspondent

In a world of Deliveroo and contactless payments, fans of traditional trading standards can now bid for what is purportedly Britain's oldest shop.

Previous owners of the grade II* listed Tulip Tree, a former coach house in the village of Chiddingstone, Kent, can be traced back to 1453 and include one of Henry VIII's fathers-in-law, Thomas Boleyn. Nicoletta Fahie-Wilson, who has run the shop, post office and tearoom since 2013, is putting the lease on the market for £230,000.

LGBT ratings for churches

Kaya Burgess
Religious Affairs Correspondent

Oxford students have rated local churches based on how "safe" they are for gay and transgender Christians.

The students awarded scores of one to five after analysing sermons and blog posts and speaking to worshippers.

Jayne Ozanne, an LGBT rights campaigner who sits on the Church of England's General Synod, said she hoped the "exceptionally important" project would be "replicated by grassroots groups across the country".

TMS

diary@thetimes.co.uk | @timesdiary

Idle denied his French leave

As one king leaves France, another arrives. *Spamalot*, the Monty Python musical about King Arthur, begins a six-month run at the Théâtre de Paris tomorrow but seemingly without its creator. Eric Idle has said that he would love to be there but is thwarted by post-Brexit residency rules. Idle bought a remote house in Provence some 50 years ago that he calls his happiest place but is limited to spending 90 days in the EU out of every 180. The producers of *Spamalot*, which has been translated into French and now has King Arthur's taunters using outrageous English accents, have asked President Macron to give Idle, above, a dispensation for the premiere but they may have a problem. Macron is attending Mass with the Pope in Marseilles this weekend and may not think this the best time to be helping a perpetrator of *The Life of Brian*.



A TOUCHY SUBJECT
French etiquette experts, meanwhile, were discussing Macron manhandling our King. "Has he forgotten Chirac?" one fumed, referring to British headlines after a former president laid his paws on the late Queen. "One does not touch British royalty." This drew a Gallic sniff from Christophe Barbier, veteran commentator for the news channel BFM. "Edward VII didn't mind being touched in the Parisian brothels, did he?" he said. Touché.

Asked to talk about the 40th anniversary of the British social attitudes survey, the Australian novelist Kathy Lette said that we remained a class-ridden society. "Even your letters travel first and second class," she told Times Radio. This is not quite fair. We may offer two classes of stamp but in this age of equality they now arrive at exactly the same time: two weeks late.

LORDS OF BALLOT BOX
The House of Lords has dabbled in democracy again with two by-elections to top up the stock of hereditary peers. Lord Meston and Lord De Clifford won their seats as legislators. While Meston's title is a mere century old, De Clifford is the 28th of that ilk, dating from 1299. The 26th lord, his great-uncle, was a road-safety enthusiast who called for mandatory driving tests in his maiden speech in 1928 and lobbied for speed limits, both of which became law in 1934. A year later, he became the last peer to be tried for a felony in the Lords after he killed another motorist in a high-speed head-on collision. He was acquitted of manslaughter.

PRECIOUS PRONUNCIATION
On the centenary of the birth of the poet Dannie Abse, his friend and fellow bard Jeremy Robson has recalled a proud son of Splott. Abse was very close to his mother and loved to tell of how she strode into a Cardiff bookshop to buy a copy of his first book of verse. Told that they didn't have it, she protested: "But my son is the Welsh Dylan Thomas!" He finally made his name, even if some didn't know how to say it. Robson told me of one reading where the host, called Jones, kept pronouncing it "Abs". After a while Dannie interrupted and said: "Do call me Ab-*see*." To which the host said: "That's kind. And feel free to call me Jonesey".

PATRICK KIDD

Nephew 'stole our £4m mews home'

Poppy Koronka

A wealthy couple are locked in a court battle with their "devious" nephew who they claim stole their £4 million house.

Michael Lee, 79, and King-Su Huang, 73, bought a three-bedroom mews home in Kensington, southwest London, in 2004, becoming neighbours with the likes of David Puttnam, the film producer behind *Chariots of Fire*.

The house in Queen's Gate Place Mews, near the Royal Albert Hall, was bought in the name of their "very close" nephew, Cheng-Jen Ku, 40, who also has a room there. However, a row has erupted over who is the true owner.

Ku claims the house is rightfully his, as it was "gifted" to him by his aunt. Lee dismissed the claim as "piffle" at Central London county court.

Lee told Judge Alan Johns KC that his nephew began as a "cute little kid" nicknamed "Trouble", who grew into a "mean and nasty" adult. "He is trying to steal our house because he has turned out to be a devious little sod and that's why we're in court," he said.

Lee told the judge that his wife gave their nephew £1.57 million to buy the house in his name, as they already owned several properties.

Ku became the registered owner of the house, which is now worth up to £4 million. He came and went as he pleased, had a set of keys, and he and his aunt and uncle all had rooms there. Rupert Cohen, his aunt's lawyer, told the judge that the couple said there had been a clear understanding that she was the true owner, with her nephew holding it in trust.

"Mrs Huang claims that she and her nephew agreed, prior to the purchase of the property, that the property be registered in his name, but the beneficial interest would be hers," he said.

Scott Redpath, Ku's barrister, said the clear intention was to "give this property to him". The nephew claims that the house was a gift from his aunt in line with Taiwanese custom, although conceding she may have rights to a "minority" stake in the property.



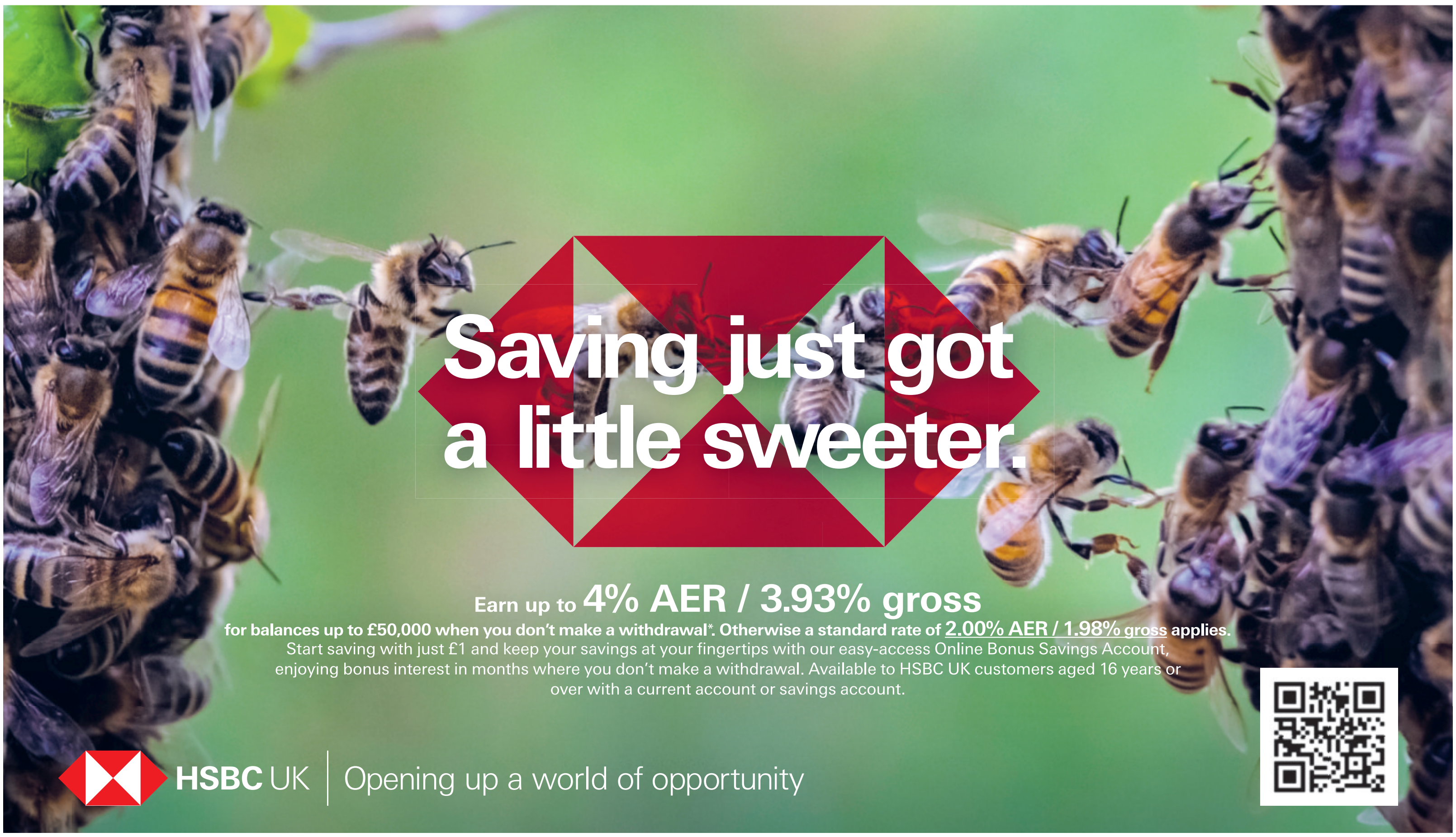
Cheng-Jen Ku claims the house is rightfully his

He said this was to "preserve the family wealth" with the "cultural expectation that, if gifted a property, he will maintain it for the wider family".

Huang's lawyers pointed out that she and her husband paid all the bills for the house and claimed her nephew only used the property "with her consent".

Lee made his fortune through an Essex-based electronics company and met his wife while working in Taiwan.

The case continues and the judge is expected to reserve his ruling.



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ALASTAIR MUIR



Call my buff A scene from David Dawson's Four Last Songs, an adaptation of Richard Strauss's song cycle, performed by English National Ballet at Sadler's Wells theatre

Got Wordle in one? How thousands cheat their way to the answer daily

Mark Sellman
Technology Correspondent

Today's Wordle answer is Cheat. Or Fraud. Or maybe Grift. Well, it is if you are one of the estimated 10,000 chancers who are gaming Wordle every day.

That is according to a retired American academic who has discovered a suspicious number of users who are acing the target word in one attempt. James Dilger, professor emeritus at Stony Brook University in New York, delved under the bonnet of the word game, played by two million worldwide.

Developed by Josh Wardle, a Welshman, in 2021 it was sold to The New York Times a year later. Players have six attempts to guess the five-letter daily "target" word, out of a possible 2,315.

Dilger, 71, a biophysicist, was using WordleBot, a New York Times app that analyses your results, when he smelt a rat. "I noticed one day an awful lot of people answered with one guess and thought, 'that's strange'. And then I paid attention to it and it was happening day after day. Well, I'm a science nerd and wanted to know what's going on."

He downloaded the data from the app and discovered that 0.2-0.5 per cent of players would solve the puzzle in one attempt. The odds of guessing the one of 2,315 possible target words at random is 0.043 per cent (1 to 2,315). This implies that 4,000 — 10,000 players cheat by obtaining the target word elsewhere.

Dilger writes: "Do I mean to tell you that never, not once, was the share per cent of the first guess less than 0.2 per cent (4,000 players)? Yup! So, at least five times as many people as expected were 'guessing' the target word by 'chance'!"

He said that even allowing for the fact that about 800 target words had been used, the lucky guess would have only 0.066 per cent odds. "Yet, it happens consistently every day! Some days it's as high as 0.5 per cent (10,000 players). What shall we call these people? Hmmm, "cheaters" comes to mind, so that's what I call 'em!"

Cheating Wordlers have previously come under the microscope through an analysis of Google Trends. A study by WordFinderx found that swill and aroma were the words cheated for most at the time.

Cheats can delve into chatrooms to find the answer or search social media. The really dedicated could solve the puzzle on one account and post the solution on another for the kudos. But why? It bothers Dilger too: "How can these people actually have fun with it day after day? It's a mystery to me."

Although it is a one-player game, there is often a competitive aspect to Wordle and Dilger says he plays against his sister and daughter. A 2020 study of video gamers showed that many players became "frustrated" and then felt "joy" or "relief" after having surpassed the hurdle with a cheat.

Dilger also discovered other nuggets. Players are illogically attached to their first guess word, even after it is has been the target word and thus cannot be used again. This happened with audio, crane, irate and heart.

Players can also be easily swayed. Adieu is the most popular starting word on account of its four vowels but Dilger noted it had a surge in popularity on August 15. Why? A New York Times mini-crossword clue that day was "most popular starting Wordle guess".

"This seems to have inspired about 30,000 players to abandon whatever opening strategy they had been using and follow the crowd," he wrote in the paper, which he has submitted to Recreational Mathematics Magazine. He concludes: "We are baffled as to how first word cheaters actually have fun playing, but that does not diminish our enjoyment of the game!" Or, as parents and teachers often say, you're only cheating yourself.

Mice walk again after spinal cords were severed

Rhys Blakely Science Correspondent

Scientists have helped mice with severed spinal cords to walk again, raising hopes for paralysed humans.

Not all injuries that lead to paralysis are alike. If the spinal cord — the bundle of nerve cells that carries instructions in the form of electrical messages from the brain to the body — is not entirely cut, it can heal itself and recover. However, when the cord is completely severed there is no natural repair and no improvement.

Researchers had already induced mice's nerve cells in severed spinal cords to regrow and bridge gaps, but the electrical messages did not get through and the mice remained paralysed.

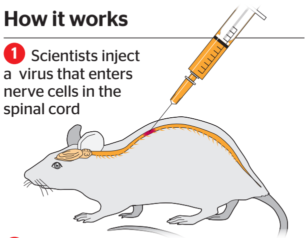
Having refined their technique, the researchers then used different viruses to carry genetic code into neurons on either side of an injury, promoting the growth of axons — a cable that snakes away from the main part of the cell and carries electrical messages — and a kind of homing beacon to receive the signals. The therapy was effective: mice with spinal cord injuries regained the ability to walk. Their movements resembled those seen in rodents that resumed walking after partial spinal cord injuries which healed naturally.

"Our study provides crucial insights into the intricacies of axon regeneration [and] guiding them to reach their target regions to achieve meaningful neurological restoration," said Michael Sofroniew of UCLA's medical school, a senior author of the study, which was published in the journal Science.

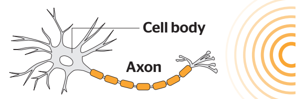
The next step, which will involve testing the procedure in monkeys, will take several years. Testing in humans could then follow.

How it works

1 Scientists inject a virus that enters nerve cells in the spinal cord



2 Virus carries genetic code that prompts the cells to produce a protein that causes the "axon" part of the cell to grow



3 A second virus carries a different piece of genetic code. This causes cells to produce a protein that acts like a homing beacon — and axons grow towards it

Mental health services 'running red hot' as nurse roles go unfilled

Kat Lay Health Editor

The NHS mental health chief has said she is concerned that one in five specialist nurse roles remains unfilled as services run "red hot".

The warning came as leading charities urged the prime minister to follow through on a manifesto pledge and end the "inhumane imprisonment" of disabled people on mental health units.

Claire Murdoch, national mental health director, was speaking to the Health Service Journal a year after a series of high-profile documentaries exposed poor care and abuse at mental health trusts. She has launched programmes aiming to improve safety and the cultures on mental health wards.

She said: "The bit that absolutely we need to acknowledge [around changing cultures] is there are some significant workforce and staffing challenges, which I'm concerned about, with a 20 per cent vacancy of qualified registered mental health nurses nationally.

"There are new support roles, psychology assistant roles, physician associates — there are all sorts coming into being in inpatient care, but a lot of services are still struggling with staffing."

She added: "Stability in staffing is vital to developing safe and therapeutic care, so patients can have continuity of care, and staff can build trust, which is fundamental to managing risk."

She also warned that beds were around 97 per cent filled, saying services were "running red hot".

Last month The Times reported that the government is likely to scrap Mental Health Act reforms.

The National Autistic Society and learning disability charity Mencap have warned that should the Mental Health Bill fail to become law before the next general election, thousands of people with autism and learning disabilities will continue to be wrongly held in mental health hospitals.

In open letters to Rishi Sunak, they say more than 2,000 are stuck in mental health hospitals "that can't meet their needs and can cause harm", with an average of four per day admitted since the government introduced an earlier draft bill. The government has committed to reducing inpatient numbers by March 2024 — Mencap calculates at the current rate that will not happen until November 2028.

Tim Nicholls of the National Autistic Society, said: "This is one of the greatest human rights crises of our generation — and it must end now."

Officer in murder case is given bail



TAYFUN SALCI/ZUMA/ALAMY

Prosper and Helen Kaba attend the hearing involving the death of their son, Chris Kaba, below, who was shot in September last year

A Metropolitan Police firearms officer charged with the murder of an unarmed man in south London has been released on bail (David Woode writes).

Chris Kaba, 24, was hit in the head by a single bullet after a "silent follow" by officers in an unmarked car in Streatham Hill on September 5 last year. The construction worker died in hospital. A post-mortem examination gave a provisional cause of death as a gunshot wound to the head.

The officer, known only as NX121, appeared at the Old Bailey yesterday. During an earlier hearing at Westminster magistrates' court, Nina Tempia, the district judge, imposed reporting restrictions.

Mark Lucraft KC, the recorder of London, said a plea and trial preparation hearing would be held on December 1. An interim trial date was fixed for September 9 next year. The judge also granted the defendant bail, adding that he must live at the address provided and surrender his passport.

Lucraft said: "What I need to make clear is the breach of any of these terms will lead to your remand in custody."

The parents of the victim, Prosper and Helen Kaba, attended the 20-minute hearing, sitting with relatives. Supporters of the family were present in the public gallery.

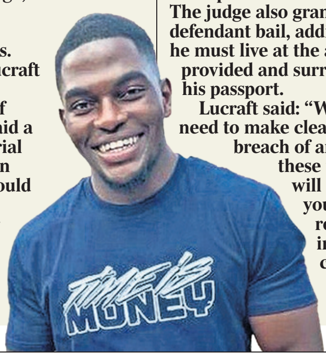
Before the hearing, Kaba's family said they could not understand why the officer's identity could not be reported.

In a statement issued through the charity Inquest, his family said: "On what we have been told until now, we can see no basis on which the officer in question should not be named as part of the fair and accurate reporting of this case, which is in the interests of open justice."

The Independent Office for Police Conduct began a homicide investigation days after the killing. Investigators passed a file of evidence to prosecutors in March. The Crown Prosecution Service [CPS] said yesterday that it had authorised a charge of murder against the officer.

Rosemary Ainslie, head of the CPS special crime division, said: "Mr Kaba died … after he was struck by a single bullet in Streatham Hill, south London. The CPS reminds all concerned that criminal proceedings against the officer are active and he has the right to a fair trial.

"It is extremely important there should be no reporting, commentary or sharing of information online which could in any way prejudice these proceedings."



Transplant girl, eight, has immune system 'reprogrammed' in UK first

Kat Lay, Health Editor

An eight-year-old girl had her immune system "reprogrammed" before a kidney transplant in a UK first that will spare her a lifelong drug regimen.

Aditi Shankar had a stem cell transplant using bone marrow taken from her mother, who also donated the kidney. The treatment means that the new kidney works without the need for Aditi to take immunosuppressant drugs to stop her body rejecting it.

Immunosuppressants work by dampening the body's immune system. Although this can be vital to prevent a body from rejecting a transplanted organ, it leaves patients more vulnerable to infection and complications.

Aditi was able to stop taking immunosuppressants only a month after her surgery at Great Ormond Street Hospital in London. Her mother, Divya, said: "I was so happy to give her blood cells and a kidney. I just feel so proud."

Aditi can now swim, sing, dance and play on her trampoline. Her favourite subject at school is science, and she has developed a keen interest in biology.

She was referred to Great Ormond Street when she was five, and given a diagnosis of a rare genetic condition called Schimke's immuno-osseous dysplasia, which affects the immune system and kidneys. It affects only one child in three million. The condition meant that Aditi had to travel to central London from her home in Greenford, northwest London, at least three times a week for dialysis.



Aditi Shankar needed a new kidney because of a rare genetic condition

In March 2021 her kidney function dropped drastically but because her immune system was weak an immediate kidney transplant was not possible. So the renal, immunology and stem cell transplant teams at Great Ormond Street worked with international colleagues to come up with a plan.

For four weeks, Aditi stayed in the intensive care unit having her bone marrow transplant as well as 24-hour dialysis. Six months later, in March this year, Aditi was well enough for the kidney transplant.

"My mum gave me my new blood cells," Aditi said. "I got the kidney transplant when I went to special sleep and closed my eyes. Now I have got the line out, I can go swimming."

Aditi's father, Uday, said: "Most of the support for the family has come from Aditi. She was going in for six to eight hours of dialysis then she would come home and still light the house up."

Professor Stephen Marks, children's kidney specialist at Great Ormond Street Hospital, said: "It really is great to see that she is an active eight-year-old girl, back to school, able to have an excellent quality of life, when in March 2021 we were in a situation of discussing, 'what is the future going to hold?'

"Here we are in the situation where she no longer needs dialysis but she has an excellent immune system and an excellent kidney transplant, doing the function that her kidneys would have done if they hadn't failed.

"It is exciting for Aditi to be the first patient in the UK, the first under the NHS, to have had a kidney transplant for this condition and to be off immunosuppression within a month."

Asked about the potential use of the double procedure among other patients, Marks said: "Everything in life, especially in medicine, is about the risks and benefit ratio. Undergoing this double transplant with a bone marrow transplant, then followed by a kidney transplant six months later, has a much higher risk of causing injury to the patient and also death, so we always have to balance each individual case.

"There are subgroups of patients who have particular kidney diseases involving the immune system … you could postulate that for some of these conditions that increased risk may be worth taking because that patient may not be able to survive long term on dialysis."

Marks will present details of the case at the European Society for Paediatric Nephrology conference next week. An editorial detailing the findings is due to be published in the journal Paediatric Transplantation.

Sailor aimed crossbow at the police

Debbie White

A drunk former Royal Navy sailor threatened to shoot police in the head while aiming at them with a loaded crossbow, a court heard.

Officers compared the Iraq and Afghanistan veteran Simon Sanderson to Raoul Moat, who shot a policeman during a six-day manhunt in 2010.

Sanderson, 43, of Shortlanesend, near Truro in Cornwall, appeared at Plymouth crown court for sentencing following a trial at Truro crown court. Judge Mathew Turner said Sanderson had been convicted of three threats to kill officers from Devon and Cornwall police, assault occasioning actual bodily harm and making threats with an offensive weapon in a private place. He jailed him for three-and-a-half-years.

Ramsay Quaife, defending, said Sanderson had "served in the Royal Navy for 17 years before being discharged. He saw service in Iraq, Afghanistan and other theatres. He is in custody for the first time in his life."

Police had been called to Sanderson's home in May after he attacked his girlfriend following a drinking session.

Jason Beal, prosecuting, told the court how Sanderson aimed a crossbow out of a window and warned officers: "I'm ex-navy, I know what I'm doing. You'll have to get the armed police here. I'll pop you in the f***ing head." The court also heard he had said: "If I see a head, it is going." The stand-off ended after 20 minutes when armed police arrived and arrested Sanderson, who said: "I just lost the plot."

Schoolboy who praised Hitler jailed

David Brown

A schoolboy who described himself as "Hitler's strongest soldier" was sentenced to youth custody yesterday after defacing a Windrush mural and fantasising about killing an Asian pupil.

Aristedes Haynes, now 17, became obsessed with the far-right and white supremacy while using the internet in his bedroom during lockdown, the Old Bailey heard yesterday. Mr Justice Jeremy Baker said it was in the public interest to lift the normal restriction on identifying defendants aged under 18. Haynes turns 18 on Sunday.

He was expelled from the RAF cadets for Nazi activities including posing with a swastika while making a Nazi salute and threatening to attack any black recruit who joined the squadron. He wore a swastika on his chest at his school prom, a judge was told.

Haynes, from Cwmavon, south Wales, was not arrested until months later, having carried out racist and homophobic attacks that terrified local communities. He defaced the new Windrush mural in Port Talbot and set off a smoke bomb at the Queer Emporium café in Cardiff. The schoolboy, then aged 16, bragged about his actions on a Telegram social media site used by extremists.

He pleaded guilty to two charges of possessing a terrorist document, three of distributing a terrorist document and three charges of criminal damage. He was jailed for one year and 220 days, with a further one year on licence.

News

Shaving report used to tell refugees' ages

Matt Dathan Home Affairs Editor

A report by Gillette on when men start shaving has been used by Home Office officials to determine the ages of migrants claiming to be children.

The practice was revealed at a hearing of an appeal by an Afghan asylum seeker who was challenging a Home Office age assessment that had put him nine years older than he was.

The asylum seeker, who has not been named, said he was under 18 when he arrived in a small boat in October 2021, having been rescued by the coastguard in the Channel. He was interviewed by two immigration officers on arrival in Dover, who determined his age as 25.

The judge who presided over the appeal at an immigration tribunal in July determined that his real age at the time of his arrival in the UK was 16, after scrutinising the Home Office's age assessment process and copies of identity documents provided. He delivered a verdict that criticised the process used by the officials to assess age, which involved "guesswork and speculation".

The case is likely to raise more questions about the Home Office's claims that more than half of asylum seekers who say they are under 18 are adults.

From next year, new scientific methods for age assessments will be introduced, including x-rays of bones and teeth. The assessment is part of the Home Office's attempts to crack down on "bogus" claims from adult migrants who say they are children to receive beneficial treatment.

The hearing heard that officials had referenced a report from Gillette, the razor company, on the age at which people start shaving. Officials argued that the asylum seeker had said in his interview that he started shaving before leaving Afghanistan, leading them to conclude that he was older than he claimed by noting his "thick eyebrows, stubble, defined Adam's apple and triangular face shape".

The officials believed his "appearance strongly suggested he was over 25 and he was assigned a date of birth of 26 March 1996", the judgment said.

The judge said that observations about appearance, behaviour and "overall demeanour" were "inherently subjective and not properly capable of bearing much evidential weight".

Enver Solomon, chief executive of the Refugee Council, who has provided support to the asylum seeker, said the case exposed the complexity of assessing an individual's age.

He said: "Distinguishing between adults and children is not something that can be done quickly … We know from our work that this has dreadful ramifications for these children who simply want to be safe and are then left alone with no one to protect them."

The Home Office said it was considering the judgment carefully to "understand where any improvements can be made to future assessments".



Rare pairings give Prada fringe benefits

Anna Murphy
FASHION DIRECTOR

It's a period of change in fashion at the moment, with designers incoming and outgoing at some of the biggest brands. Sabato De Sarno will make his debut as creative director at Gucci in Milan today, one of the most anticipated shows for some time. In Paris later this month Sarah Burton will present her final Alexander McQueen collection.

What hasn't changed is Prada's ability to stage a talking-point show. Yesterday it turned its cavernous headquarters in the Italian fashion capital into, well, what exactly? The interior was clad with pastel-painted perforated metal sheeting. A curtain of slime oozed from the ceiling, eventually gathering in sandworm-like casts in the middle of the catwalk.

But the raison d'etre, as always with Prada, was the clothes. On the one hand there was the light-as-a-feather femininity with, at times, an almost flapper-girl edge. Think spun-sugar shift dresses worn with jewel-hued satin kitten heels, or crystalline embellishment across black chiffon and plenty of Roaring Twenties fringing.

The contrasting masculine tropes ranged from the on-duty (retooled grey-and-black suiting, the blazer tucked into trousers or tailored shorts) to the off-duty (an outsize patchwork blouson jacket or leather-collared wax jacket).

Not that Prada kept these two modes separate. Its aesthetic has long been about the juxtaposition of supposed wrongs into a whole new "right". Hence the wax jackets were paired with assorted takes on that aforementioned fringing and sparkle, plus a side order of transparency.





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Tone-on-tone tastefulness, left and centre, worked for Max Mara in Milan while Prada's contrasting fringing, sparkle and tailoring add up to a must-buy collection

Here is a brand that couldn't be less interested in mere good taste, yet still produces collections which — when broken down into their constituent parts in the shops — veritably bristle with must-buys.

Max Mara demonstrated the other side to the Milanese equation. You couldn't get more tasteful than its soothingly gorgeous display of so-called tone-on-tone dressing. The brand may have made its name with camel — and there was, as always, plenty of that — but there were also multilayered ensembles based around pinks or greens, blues or yellows.

There was a workwear-ish feel to some of the cotton drill separates. Yet the delivery was unquestionably upscale. This was a case of how the other half works.

Footballer fined £57k for drink-driving Lamborghini

Katie Gibbons

The footballer Jesse Lingard has apologised for putting lives at risk as he admitted driving at more than twice the legal alcohol limit.

The former England and Manchester United player was fined a week's pay — £57,000 — for driving his £200,000 Lamborghini after drinking alcohol.

Lingard, 30, was stopped by police on July 8 while speeding in Greater Manchester, Manchester magistrates' court was told. He appeared to officers to be under the influence of alcohol, and a breath test revealed 76 micrograms of alcohol in 100 millilitres of breath — the legal limit is 35 micrograms per 100 millilitres. Frank Rogers, in mitigation, described Lingard's actions as "out of character".

Lingard, who admitted a charge of drink-driving, had been out for a meal with friends and had only had soft drinks, Rogers said. He had then had a "few drinks" with another professional footballer before driving home. Rogers said Lingard had "mistakenly" believed he had left sufficient time to drive safely. A personal assistant, who would usually drive Lingard in such circumstances, was not working, he added.



Jesse Lingard said that he was sorry for "risking lives"

Lingard is without a football club but has been training with West Ham United after spending last season with Nottingham Forest. He has been banned from driving for 18 months, to run concurrently with an existing six-month ban for failing to disclose who was driving another of his vehicles that was caught speeding.

Sentencing, judge Joanne Hirst told Lingard the case had aggravating features, including him being twice over the limit, saying: "One wonders who would have cared for your family had you killed yourself or someone else."

Lingard said in a statement: "I want to acknowledge my mistake and publicly apologise for my unacceptable actions. I completely understand and accept the consequences of my mistake by putting the lives of others at risk.

"I am sorry to all my fans and anyone who has followed and supported me throughout my career. I accept the sentence of the court and the fine."

Nightclub boss jailed after bribing Met officer

David Woode Crime Correspondent

A nightclub entrepreneur who bribed a Metropolitan Police officer with sex workers and meals has been jailed.

Ryan Bishti, 43, of South Kensington, west London, owned the Cirque le Soir nightclub in Soho. Bishti provided a former sergeant in the Westminster licensing unit with meals, call girls and renovation work. In return the officer turned a blind eye to fights and allegations of sexual assault at the club.

Southwark crown court was told footage of the officer was found on Bishti's phone. Bishti, Terry Neil, 57, co-director of a security firm, and Anna Ginandes, 46, a nightclub owner, all denied a charge of bribery but were found guilty in July.

Judge Chris Hehir told Bishti yesterday his bribery was "sophisticated". Bishti was jailed for four years. Ginandes, of Camden, northwest London, was given a 20-month sentence suspended for 12 months. Neil, of Slough, Berkshire, was jailed for 30 months.



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News

Vaping doesn't lead to smoking, study shows

Kat Lay Health Editor

Vaping does not act as a gateway into smoking, the most comprehensive study carried out suggests.

Researchers at Queen Mary University of London said there was "tentative" evidence that products such as e-cigarettes might be speeding up the demise of smoking.

Their study compared data on the use and sales of electronic cigarettes with data on smoking rates and cigarette sales in countries that had historically similar levels and rates of smoking, but regulated vaping differently.

Professor Peter Hajek, director of the Wolfson Institute of Preventive Medicine's Tobacco Dependence Research Unit at the university, said: "The results of this study alleviate the concern that access to e-cigarettes and other low-risk nicotine products promote smoking. There is no sign of that — and there are some signs that they in fact compete against cigarettes, but more data over a longer time period are needed to determine the size of this effect."

There is increasing concern in the UK about levels of vaping among children, which have risen rapidly since the advent of disposable vapes.

In June, Amanda Pritchard, chief executive of NHS England, called for regulation to "nip this in the bud" after the number of under-20s admitted to hospital due to e-cigarettes quadrupled in two years.

Rishi Sunak, the prime minister, is understood to be putting the finishing touches to plans designed to restrict teenagers' access to the products, including a ban on disposable vapes and those with flavours designed to appeal to children. Fears of the impact of vapes on youngsters have included some claims that children who use the products may go on to smoke.

The research team compared the United Kingdom and United States to Australia, where sales of e-cigarettes containing nicotine are banned. They also considered evidence from Sweden, where oral nicotine pouches, or snus, are popular, and Japan and South Korea where "heat-not-burn" tobacco products are widely used.

Researchers had faced issues with the robustness of available data, but found that overall the decline in the number of smokers appeared to have been slower in Australia than in the UK. Australia was slower than the UK and the US when it came to declining smoking prevalence among young people and the less well-off. The decline in cigarette sales has also accelerated faster in the UK than in Australia.

The research was funded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research. Professor Brian Ferguson, the director of its public health research programme, said: "The initial findings are valuable but no firm conclusions can be drawn. More research is needed to understand further the impact alternative nicotine delivery products, such as e-cigarettes, might have on smoking rates."

HENRY DILTZ



Yesterday **This 1971 image of Paul and Linda McCartney has won the "icon" prize at the Abbey Road Studio Music Photography Awards. Henry Diltz, 85, was a friend of Linda, who asked him to take the picture, a Life magazine cover that year**

Laughing gas ban 'may put users at risk'

Shayma Bakht

A ban on laughing gas could leave young users at risk if they start illicitly buying in bulk, drug experts warn.

Nitrous oxide, which is to be banned by the end of the year and classified as a class C substance, has become increasingly popular since the pandemic.

A law approved by MPs last week imposes a sentence of up to two years in prison or an unlimited fine for the unlawful possession of the small canisters in which the gas is often supplied. The use of nitrous oxide will still be legal for medical and commercial purposes.

Experts say the new law could endanger recreational users who overdose, with those needing medical care less likely to seek help. Nitrous oxide is the third most used drug among people aged 16 to 24 in the UK.

Ian Hamilton, an associate professor of addiction at the University of York, said larger canisters were dominating the market.

"We are likely to see people trying to obtain larger quantities," he said. "The risk is just getting hold of the drug once rather than several times."

The British Medical Journal published a report last year in which doctors said they were "seeing more users presenting neurological complications after inhaling from large canisters".

Suella Braverman, the home secretary, said the law would answer the call of "British people [who] are fed up with yobs abusing drugs in public spaces".

Helpless dogs hold key to our hearts

Tom Whipple Science Editor

For Dorottya Ujfalussy, the growing popularity of flat-faced dogs like French bulldogs was a mystery. "They cannot breathe, they have difficulties with their eyes popping out, they have all kinds of problems." Why, the dog researcher wanted to know, did people want a dog that was so helpless?

The answer, according to her latest research, is contained in the question: people want these dogs precisely because they are so helpless.

When faced with a problem, such dogs are far more likely to give up, she found, and simply look imploringly at their owner.

"People like them, we think, because they are like children to them," said Ujfalussy, from Eotvos Lorand University in Hungary. "They tap into our inborn tendency to nurture."

Helped in part by the endorsement of celebrities such as Lady Gaga and Madonna, flat-faced breeds have soared in popularity. Owners report that they buy them for their personality. But they often have severe health problems, especially breathing difficulties.

"It's so heartbreaking sometimes to see that they want to run, but they cannot because they cannot get enough oxygen," Ujfalussy said. "Living with an unhealthy individual you love is heartbreaking." Their life expectancy is typically less than five years.

In a series of experiments, Ujfalussy and her colleagues looked into one of the personality traits that might distinguish the breeds and explain their appeal. The research, reported in the journal Scientific Reports, involved comparing the competence of 30 flat-faced French and English bulldogs with 15 of the conventionally snouted Hungarian Mudis with a specific task. Each set of dogs was presented with a box that they needed to work out how to open.

After 60 seconds, 90 per cent of the Mudis had succeeded. Only half of the French and English bulldogs had cracked it — often barely making an attempt. "What they would do is try once or twice, then give up," Ujfalussy said. "They would just look at their owner."

Why were they so bad at the task? The scientists recognised that a flat face might make it harder to manipulate objects, and that the dogs have difficulty lifting their paws without overbalancing. But an alternative explanation is that they simply lacked the grit to keep at it. Whether genes or owners are to blame, however, is hard to tell.

"Is this selectively bred?" Ujfalussy asked. "Or is it from life experience, where they get this positive feedback from not doing anything? Because they look like babies, we do everything for them."



Scientists found that breeds such as the English bulldog turn their puppy-dog eyes on owners at the first sign of adversity

Owners of XL bullies rush to sell

Poppy Koronka

Owners of the dangerous dog breed, the American XL bully, are rushing on to sales websites after a British ban on the breed was announced.

The animal welfare charity Dogs Trust has also reported an increase in the number of worried dog owners who are considering rehoming their pets.

The secondhand website Gumtree has registered nearly 40 per cent more XL bullies for sale after Rishi Sunak said the dogs would be added to the list of banned breed types by the end of the year. Advertised prices range from £500 to £1,500, with some owners writing that they are trying to get rid of their pets as soon as possible.

The adoption site Pets4Homes has also had a 22 per cent increase in listings since the prime minister announced the ban after a spate of attacks by the dogs. Many adult dogs are advertised with details such as "I would not like her homed with young children" and "potential owners must know this breed".

Owners who keep their dogs will be required to have them neutered and muzzled, and on a lead in public. The dogs will also need to be insured.

In Birmingham, however, defiant owners are planning a mass dog walk to "prove people wrong". A flyer for the event on September 30 reads: "Let's show how gentle the XL bully really is."



News

‘Tortured’ DJ’s girlfriend won’t come back to testify at trial

David Brown



Soon after the attack, Gozde Dalbudak went home to Turkey

A girlfriend who was kidnapped with her radio DJ boyfriend before he was tortured to death is refusing to return to Britain to give evidence, the Old Bailey was told yesterday.

Gozde Dalbudak was allegedly kept prisoner in the lavatory of a wine bar for two days while Koray Alpergin was “horrifically tortured” and strangled.

Alpergin, 43, owned Bizim FM, a London-based nationwide Turkish-language radio station and was photographed alongside the rapper P Diddy and restaurateur Salt Bae.

The businessman and his girlfriend were kidnapped outside his apartment in Enfield, north London, in October last year, in what is believed to be an operation by an organised crime group, the court was told. Crispin Aylett, KC, for the prosecution, told the jury Dalbudak arrived in the UK for the first time three days before the kidnap and spoke very little English.

“This had been her first, and no doubt last, visit to the UK,” he said. “No doubt, you are expecting to see Gozde Dalbudak in the witness box. Ms Dalbudak went back to Turkey on 21 October 2022.

“Although she has remained in contact with police officers in London — she has not come back to the UK.

“Nor is she willing to do so for the purposes of this trial — nor is she prepared to give evidence over a live link from Turkey. For perfectly understandable reasons, you may think, she wants to put the whole thing behind her.”

Her boyfriend’s naked corpse was dumped in woodland in Loughton, Essex.

A post-mortem examination identified 94 separate, visible injuries, including bruising suggesting that he was beaten with a baseball bat and evidence of boiling water being poured on his skin.

Six men deny charges including murder, kidnap, false imprisonment and perverting the course of justice.

The trial continues.

IN THE TIMES TOMORROW

SATURDAY REVIEW
RUPERT EVERETT AT 64
On sex, vanity and the allure of death
PULLOUT



WEEKEND
THE STUDENT COOKBOOK
The food editor’s easiest recipes
PULLOUT

Swans on line leave passengers in a flap

Peter Chappell

Heavy rain, floods and even swans on the line caused problems for commuters as they faced rail cancellations for the second day in a row.

On Wednesday, a swan had to be removed by National Rail staff after it blocked the line between Kingston and Hampton Wick in southwest London. Another bird managed to wander onto the line yesterday morning and cause delays between Clapham Junction and Wimbledon.

Judge Patricia Lees, who was among those delayed, apologised for keeping barristers waiting at Guildford crown court. “So sorry,” she said. “I’m afraid there were swans on the train line.” Asked on Twitter/X if the same swan was responsible for both incidents, a spokesman for South Western Railway replied: “No I don’t think so.”

There was also widespread disruption caused by heavy rain and flooding overnight, with the Met Office issuing a yellow weather warning for rain across parts of southeast England from 4pm on Wednesday until 3am yesterday morning.

Customers were warned not to travel on routes through Stevenage, Hertfordshire, to King’s Cross after damage to overhead electrical wires. A National Rail statement said all lines on the route were closed following “a number of incidents”.

Disruption was also reported through Tulse Hill in south London and Ealing in the west of the capital, as well as through Cheltenham Spa in Gloucestershire and between Lewes and Wivelsfield in East Sussex. Flooding had earlier affected lines at Burnham, Buckinghamshire, and between Swansea and Llandrindod.

The weather eased throughout the day yesterday, with some sunny spells. Aidan McGivern, a forecaster at the Met Office, said: “Some cooler weather and chilly nights are likely as we move towards the weekend.”

Weather, page 59



Bob Mortimer and Paul Whitehouse, of the BBC’s Gone Fishing. Whitehouse is speaking

Great Scott's show is less than the sum of its parts

Theatre Dominic Maxwell

Vanya
Duke of York's, WC2
★★☆☆☆

It's one of the greatest plays ever written. He's a great actor: the hot priest from *Fleabag*; Moriarty in *Sherlock*; a slew of stage triumphs. So what can go wrong when the mighty Andrew Scott stars in a one-man rejig of Chekhov's 1898 tragicomedy *Uncle Vanya*? Quite a lot, it turns out.

Vanya lasts less than two hours but is played at such a consistently doleful pitch that it feels longer. It's not that Scott is ever less than consummate in each individual performance. He acts it out on a rehearsal-room set (by Rosanna Vize) complete with a working kitchen for him to make tea at as he playfully gears up for his endurance test. Take any chunk of this out of context, as he unfussily swaps between eight voices with or (more often) without any physical lurches, and you might just be wowed by Scott's quietly humane commitment to his characters. If you are always totally on top of which one is which. (Significant if.)

And Simon Stephens's new version is full of nimble touches. Vanya himself, here called Ivan, sometimes wears shades (sometimes, more puzzlingly, plays with a plastic sound-effects box). Alexander, the sententious brother-in-law who may just turf Ivan and his niece Sonia out of this family estate, is a faded film-maker. Astrov, the doctor and conservationist here known as Michael, knows how to chug back his Smirnoff. I suspect it reads very well.

It's not a joy to watch, though. Scott has umpteen strengths, but being the man of a thousand voices is not one of them. He is, purposely, trading in fine distinctions. Sonia sometimes grasps a red tea towel, Maureen the housekeeper puffs on herbal cigarettes, but mostly we have to keep our eyes peeled and our ears unwaxed. Dishing out diffidence, defiance and despair, everyone comes up subtly different hues of Andrew Scott. You know what's going on, but you might find yourself hard at work to stay clued in, like a party guest trying to remember everyone's names.

MARC BRENNER



Andrew Scott plays eight characters — but all of them are subtly different hues of the same voice

The sleepy surface details of Chekhov conceal a roiling world of passions and frustrations. Scott, Stephens and their director Sam Yates know this well. When everyone's surfaces are so similar, though, when the pace is so torpid, the contrasts are muted and so is the drama.

So I longed for a coarser performance. Then again I also longed for an end to the two silly moments in which Scott, playing both Michael and Alexander's wife Helena, vigorously cops off with himself. At one point Scott sits cross-legged on the floor softly singing Jacques Brel's *If you go way*. It feels an indulgence.

Do I skate over moments of wit and wonder? Well, there's stuff to love in here, details to delight in if you can find your way to them. Significant if. Chekhov needs to be more dynamic than it is doleful. The case is not made here that that is a job best assigned to only one person.

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ALAMY; JONATHAN JAKOB/BBC



in Whitstable, Kent, tomorrow

Britain's polluted waters are at tipping point, says Whitehouse

Clean it up
WATER CAMPAIGN

Britain's rivers are at a "tipping point" because of sewage spills, farming and other pollution, Paul Whitehouse, the comedian and devoted angler, has said (Adam Vaughan writes).

Whitehouse, who presents *Gone Fishing* on the BBC with Bob Mortimer, said he was "bewildered" that companies were allowed to dump raw sewage in rivers and seas.

More than 300,000 sewage spills were recorded last year through "emergency relief valves", which are meant to be used only during heavy rainfall. The Office for Environmental Protection found last week that the government might have broken the law by allowing too many sewage spills. Whitehouse said dumping raw sewage into our waterways should not be legal "under any circumstances". He is to speak tomorrow at a protest against pollution in Whitstable, Kent.

The industry body Water UK, after months of reporting by The Times as part of its Clean it Up campaign, apologised for the sewage spills and promised £10 billion this decade to tackle them.

The government introduced a "plan for water" in April but Whitehouse said there was no "overarching" wastewater scheme. He said that while travelling to fish he had found many rivers were being choked. "It's not all bad," he said. "But there are certainly places where it's got to a tipping point."

A spokesman for Water UK said: "We recognise more should have been done to tackle the harm caused by sewage spills. We have a plan to start to put it right."

Nick Mills, of Southern Water, said money was being invested to curb storm overflows and Whitsable was "at the forefront of our work".

The government was asked to comment.

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Biden won't budge but he's becoming a liability
Gerard Baker
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Comment

Lib Dems are looking like kingmakers again

Of the 91 seats in which the party came second in 2019, 80 are Tory-held — it's time to start paying attention to Ed Davey



Patrick Maguire

@PATRICKKMAGUIRE

There's something missing from the debate over Rishi Sunak's green policies. The argument Downing Street would like to have — indeed, the argument the Labour Party is determined not to have — pits a cartoon version of Ed Miliband against the tradesmen of England. And it is true that the prime minister's new belligerence on questions of climate is a challenge to Sir Keir Starmer. To complain that the leader of the opposition has not yet explained his vision for the British economy is to ignore the hundreds of hours he and his shadow ministers have spent hymning green industries and net zero. Now the Conservatives are to spend many hundreds more reminding you exactly what it is those shadow ministers said.

Almost no attention has been paid to the opportunity Sunak has afforded another knight of the realm: Sir Ed Davey. Let's not sound too surprised. Such are the occupational hazards of life as leader of the Liberal Democrats. But history tells us that what this week means for the Lib Dems will in time take on an outsized significance. The collapse in the Liberal vote in 1951 saw Attlee fall to Churchill; tactical voting in 1997 quickened Blair's landslide. Davey's aides note smugly that a Blair-style swing will deliver Starmer a majority of just one.

Davey's predecessors railed against the brewers and established church. An undergraduate environmentalist, his own animating struggle is the defilement of England's fields, rivers and beaches by concrete, asphalt and sewage. That is the argument he would like to have with the Tories. Sunak's MPs in the south of England feared he had already won it even before this week. If so, it is difficult to plot any route to another Tory government that does not run through some unforeseen catastrophe for Labour. All of which, I am sorry to have to tell you, means it is time to start paying attention to everything else that Davey is saying and doing, starting with his party's conference in Bournemouth this weekend.

The last time they held their conference in person, in the hot, hysterical autumn of 2019, the Lib Dems met in the same place. Implausibly, journalists were briefed by the former future Labour leader Chuka Umunna about polling that suggested Jo Swinson would win her party 200 MPs. Delegates voted to

> Davey has won nearly 1,000 new councillors, mostly from the Tories

fight the next election on a promise to cancel Brexit without recourse to a second referendum. Swinson was sold to voters as: "Your Candidate for Prime Minister."

And look how it ended: £11 million spent on returning 11 MPs, not one of whom was Jo Swinson. Four years on, the Lib Dems return to Bournemouth in rude health. Here one could quote any number of great historians on the tidal fortunes of third parties but only the late Sid Waddell on Big Cliff Lazarenko really speaks to the moment: it's the greatest comeback since Lazarus. Davey has won nearly 1,000 new councillors, mostly from the Tories, and four MPs in by-elections that a blue-rinsed donkey would once have held in its sleep. Those victories were made possible, or at least comfortably, by a non-aggression pact with Labour — never negotiated directly, sources close to Starmer tell me, but via nods and winks.

And don't Conservative MPs know it. Of the 91 seats in which Lib Dems finished second in 2019, 80 are Tory-held, almost all of them in the south. Even Jeremy Hunt, the chancellor, reminds colleagues that he too is at risk. In 2021, the Tory backbenchers with most to fear from a Lib Dem revival convened a WhatsApp group named the Love Bombers after David Cameron's preferred seduction technique for centrist voters.

Now (wisely) renamed the Local Champions, reports from its 74 members of aggressive Lib Dem activity ring out from their phones like a funeral toll. MPs marooned on the western front of English politics — Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Gloucestershire — offer daily counsels of despair, as do those in Home Counties towns traditionally untroubled by such worries. John Major's old maids bicycling to Communion through the morning mist are no longer voting Tory. This week their MPs met in the Commons for a crash course in campaigning. The advice? Outwork your opponents. Focus on local issues.

Would that they could. Conservative activists, an ageing and unhappy few, are incapacitated by gloom. "Their members are younger, more numerous, and literally more mobile than ours," sighs a former minister. "Our lot increasingly don't want to go out." Nor do MPs. Earlier this month they were invited to join Claire Coutinho, the new energy secretary, on the doors in Mid Bedfordshire, a coveted Lib Dem

ANDREW MATTHEWS/PA



The coming Lib Dem party conference will be its most crucial for many years

target. Not one turned up. The fatalism has only intensified since Sunak's speech on net zero, itself an illustration of their impotence. "Red wall MPs can bully No 10 into any policy position they want," says one backbencher. "They don't listen to us." None of this is wishful spin from Davey. This is the Conservative Party's assessment of its own standing in middle England.

At this point you might reasonably ask what any of these victories are for. In his three years as leader Davey has made no secret that his raison d'être is to unseat Tory MPs. But to what end? Obsessed with pavement politics, the Lib Dems — as Nye Bevan complained of Hugh Gaitskell — can resemble a desiccated calculating machine. Winning elections is one thing, wielding power another. Coalition taught them that lesson the hard way. George Osborne, author of their annihilation in 2015, put it best. "In the end, their 'all things to all people' approach caught up with them and then they were no things to no people."

Davey bears the psychological scars of that election, and other disasters since. And so next week he will speak with one person in mind: a middle-aged Conservative voter in rural England. Their disappointments

> 'We can't be seen to be grabbing on to Labour's coat-tails'

from 13 years of Tory rule will dominate his speech: the NHS, those filthy rivers. But there will be one intriguing exception. In conversations with senior Lib Dems it does not take long to discern a wariness about this Labour leadership and the limits of its appeal. "We can't be seen to be grabbing onto their coat-tails," says a source close to Davey. "Not least because there's nothing there to grab on to."

We will hear this publicly too. I'm told Davey will criticise Starmer for failing to commit to electoral reform, the prize that so humiliatingly eluded Nick Clegg. It may be a swipe in a speech that is soon forgotten. But I suspect it is really the announcement of his party's price tag in a hung parliament. For now the Labour leadership insist they will ignore it. But for how long?

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Britain's not really going to Raac and ruin

Crumbling concrete, Covid and sewage can make us feel a uniquely benighted nation, but are we?

Ed Conway



@EDCONWAYSKY

The Twin Bricks building is a handsome house in a suburb about 20 minutes outside Tokyo. There's nothing unique about the main bit of the house — a modernist concrete block with rectangles everywhere — but the other half of the building is rather charming. It's a confection of white panels and glass blocks, which make it look incredibly light, as if segments of the structure were suspended in mid-air.

But the really interesting thing is what it is made from. These panels are far lighter than the concrete you see elsewhere in Tokyo. They are also fireproof, have excellent insulating properties and, most important for this part of the world, are incredibly earthquake-resistant.

So what is this wonder material? The technical name is autoclaved aerated concrete. Here in the UK, where we've typically used the reinforced variety, we call it Raac.

Before it became the most feared structural substance since asbestos, shutting down English schools and forcing the evacuation of hospital wings, Raac was widely regarded as the next big thing. This unusual concrete, with little bubbles inside like an Aero bar, was "a near-perfect building material", said an American building magazine a few years ago, before asking: "Why aren't all houses built of this stuff?"

Well, we now know the answer. As we have learnt to our cost, Raac panels, especially those used to make flat roofs, are prone to corrosion, which could cause them to collapse.

While this has been cast as a very British crisis, it turns out there's nothing especially British about Raac. This porous concrete, originally invented in Sweden in the 1920s, has been used all over the world. It's not just Japan: you can find Raac roofs in Turkey, the Czech Republic, Germany, Belgium and northern France.

All of which raises a question: why is Britain seemingly the only country in the world facing a Raac crisis? To put it another way, is the problem the concrete or is the problem, well, us?

Conventional wisdom leans towards the latter. Some have posited that British builders were uniquely bad or remiss. Others suggest that maybe British Raac was just that bit worse than you find on the continent; the steel more exposed to the elements, more vulnerable to corrosion.

However, there's little other evidence that construction standards here are any worse than in most of Europe, let alone the developing world. Nor is it clear that British Raac panels were any more duff than those used elsewhere.

Raac, as it happens, is hardly the only problem with concrete. All around the world, municipalities are facing up to a concrete time bomb, as old reinforced bridges and buildings near the end of their lives. While some concrete can last centuries (the Pantheon in Rome or, more prosaically, the Victorian sewerage system in London), the quality of some new concrete housing in China is so poor it has an average lifespan of about 20 years. Nearly one in ten bridges in the US is structurally deficient. Raac, it turns out, is only the latest chapter in a long saga.



The modernist Twin Bricks building in Japan features aerated concrete

And the most compelling explanation is that Britain is not alone — that it simply noticed these problems that bit earlier than everyone else. Yes, there was poor workmanship and construction. But there was almost certainly poor workmanship and construction elsewhere, and in the coming years the chances are we will hear about problems with Raac overseas too.

None of this is to say the concrete crisis isn't emblematic of deeper problems in this country: a lack of capital investment, a neglect of infrastructure. But it's also a reminder that while it's tempting to cast Britain as an outlier, a near basket case, all too often the opposite is the case.

Consider the pandemic. Initial data suggested Britain was facing a far higher death toll, and far greater economic damage, than most other countries. Conventional wisdom was that this country was uniquely badly hit. In the event, Britain turned out to be somewhere in the middle of the pack. Our data was just that bit earlier to arrive; the early economic estimates were that bit pessimistic.

You could say something similar about water. We know that an alarming amount of sewage is being routinely spewed into our rivers and beaches — in large part because we have been faster than many other nations to collect the statistics.

It sometimes feels as if we suffer from a peculiar form of British exceptionalism, striving to paint ourselves as the most benighted country in the world. Yet when you talk to Britons, it's not as if they're uniquely miserable or deluded.

A few years ago Ipsos Mori surveyed people in various countries about their perceptions of crime, health, terrorism and other such issues. Invariably nearly everyone thought life was worse than it really was — murder rates higher, teenage pregnancies more commonplace, alcohol abuse more rife. But in the grand ranking of pessimism and delusion, Britons were the eighth least miserable and inaccurate out of 38 nationalities. Step outside the Westminster bubble and it turns out most people do take the longer view.

Ed Conway is economics and data editor of Sky News and author of Material World

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Martin Samuel Notebook

Looking for Linda… the names on the critical list

The LINDA Club is struggling for new members. Lindas among you may already know this. In 1947, one in 18 newborn girls was called Linda, according to the Wall Street Journal. Now it languishes at 800-plus in the table of baby names. Meanwhile Noah is flying, among parents with a keen interest in animals maybe, or arks.

The WSJ claims many of us can be pegged to our decade of birth on Christian name alone. Like Martin, peaking in the mid-1960s. I came along at its fashionable height. I should have been an Arthur. That was my birthright. My great-grandfather was Arthur, my grandfather and my father, too. Arthur Herbert, Arthur Ernest. I bucked the trend. My dad liked Carl, my mum thought it sounded too German. Martin Luther wasn't big in our house; or, indeed, Martin Bormann.

I would have liked to be a Carl. I remember pretending it was my name on my first day in school. Never keen on Martin, except it was also my mum's maiden name. I should be Martin-Samuel, hyphenated like the actor Terry-Thomas. That might be cool. You're an absolute shower, and all that. But I was never going to be Arthur. It was an old man's name in the Sixties.

Anyway, by the time our first was born, we were in the vanguard. Arthur was so out it was on the cusp of coming in, accounting for just 0.03 per cent of babies born in England and Wales, but about to explode. Also, we used to go to a club called ART. So it all came together. And my dad was delighted with little Arthur, named after him. I think he has gently erased the nightclub reference from memory.

Do you know who strangely fail to capture the zeitgeist on baby-naming trends? The people who manufacture those little infant trinkets sold in gift shops at tourist attractions. We'd search everywhere for an Arthur to put on his bedroom door. The nearest we got was Arturo, at a zoo in Spain. Far easier to find his brothers, Robert, now sadly out of fashion, and William, which has remained constant and is getting a fair wind on the back of our future king.



So Arthur, Robert and William. Good, traditional English names, of which we are very fond. Alternatively, "three of the most notorious Loyalist gunmen in Belfast's history", according to my friend from the province. Still, as the dwindling membership of the Linda Club will testify, you can't have it all ways.

Setting scenes

Very in at the moment, too, is set-jetting: the name for tourism linked to a film or TV show. Netflix is even doing specialist trips tied to *Emily in Paris*, with fans paying £2,100 to eat croissants and sip cocktails in her fashionable footsteps.

I tried this a few years back in Brooklyn, on a quest to locate the birthplace of the singer Harry Nilsson. Go where he went, see what he saw. It's gentrified now, Brooklyn, all craft breweries, kombu cures and second-hand vinyl. And you'll need a dog. I had an address, an afternoon to kill and a reluctant accomplice. We set off, north.

The thing with gentrification is that it has to end somewhere, like rain. Brooklyn's ends about 30 minutes in. Hipsters become derelicts. Leads become string. Booze gets cheap. Accomplices get uncomfortable. Anyway, we got there, eventually. Turns out Harry Nilsson lived in … a house. And not one that an Uber wants to pick you up from, either. That's why it's not *Emily in Brooklyn*.

Half-baked marketing

Still, anyone can make a mistake. Greggs did when they plastered their branch in Richmond, North Yorkshire, with photographs of the local area. Unfortunately, the area in question was Richmond-upon-Thames, Surrey, with signposts to London landmarks such as Kew Gardens and Tower Bridge, roughly 240 miles away.

It's almost as if Greggs is a chain bakery with 2,000 locations, banging out largely generic produce in formats ranging from drive-thru to 24-hour opening, and its attempt to appear folksy and local is as empty as some of its pie fillings. Any smart customer knows that; so why doesn't the marketing department?

THUNDERER

Closed-door trials are an assault on transparent justice

Sean O'Neill

The Law Commission exists, so it says, to keep the law under review and recommend reforms where necessary. It purports to be modern and fair but its latest proposals threaten to plunge the criminal justice system into an era of darkness and inaccessibility.

The commission believes the way to improve conviction rates in sexual offences trials may be to bar the public and the press (save for one named representative) from the courtroom. It provisionally proposes this behind-closed-doors approach when the victim of an assault is giving evidence, but is happy to listen to arguments to conduct entire trials in private. The thinking to reduce the stress on the victim. The flipside is secret trials for alleged rapists.

At a fundamental level, these ideas are a direct assault on the once-cherished belief that justice has to be seen to be done. Central to this notion is the role of the press, the court reporter with notebook and pen, as "the eyes and ears of the public".

On a practical level, there are multiple problems. Who decides the identity of that one member of the press? What accreditation will they have and will anyone be able to object? The outcome would be severely curtailed media coverage of important court cases, undermining public confidence in the trial system.

The commission assumes the presence of reporters is a deterrent to witnesses giving evidence. Yet there are many already special measures available — screens, video links — to protect nervous witnesses. Coverage of such trials also reaches other victims of repeat offenders, encouraging them to come forward.

The real obstacle in sexual offences cases has been the attitude of police and prosecutors. Public confidence in policing is at rock bottom following revelations about rampant misogyny in the ranks. That has been coupled with the view that rape cases are just too much bother.

I recently interviewed a woman who had been advised by officers to drop her case against a serial offender because it would be stressful, time-consuming and legally difficult. Even when cases are pursued by police, the CPS has been taking fewer to court. Contrast that with the journalists who have worked diligently for months and years to investigate serious allegations against the likes of Russell Brand.

Coming hard on the heels of an advancing privacy law, restrictions on naming criminal suspects and closed material hearings, the Law Commission's half-baked proposals are chilling for open justice and a free press. These so-called reformers would do well to heed the words of the former lord chief justice Lord Thomas who, after an attempt to conduct a secret terrorism trial in 2014, declared: "Justice that is not open is not good justice."



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Biden won't budge but he's becoming a liability

Polls suggest the public are pessimistic about his chances as the cost of living and scandals about Hunter begin to bite

Gerard Baker



@GERARDTBAKER

Between them, Dylan Thomas and John McCain may have best captured Joe Biden's state of mind as he defies the doubters and plans his octogenarian run for president.

We can't know Biden's interior motivation but suiting up for another presidential campaign seems, in part at least, his way of heeding the poet's plea not to go gentle into that good night. McCain, more prosaically and basing his words on a saying of his friend Mo Udall, may have framed it better when he stated "the only known cure for presidential ambition is embalming fluid".

There is a surreal quality to contemporary American presidential politics. As things stand we remain locked on course for a grotesque repeat contest next year between a man who might well be a convicted felon by election day, and a man most voters think, with reason, is cognitively unable to meet the demands of the office.

The choice on offer for the world's most powerful country: the Unspeakable versus the Incapable.

Republican voters still have a chance to avert their half of that calamity if they choose. For Democrats the challenge is different: as with all incumbents the choice is largely Biden's. But the pressure on him to withdraw is mounting. Polling data, lukewarm support from aides and even advice from friends are all leaning on him.

There has never been a president this old. Official US government actuarial tables say that at 82 (his age when Biden would take office for a second term) there's a slightly greater than 50 per cent chance that a man will die in the next four years — which makes a vote for Biden next year literally a coin toss between him and his manifestly awful running mate.

Polling suggests the public is more pessimistic: a CBS poll last weekend found only a third believed Biden would finish a second term, foreshortened by either his demise or resignation. Last week, David Ignatius, a Washington Post columnist supposedly admired by the president, made waves with a fairly brutal column urging Biden to step aside. "Mr President, maybe this is that moment when duty has been served," he wrote.

Is all this morbid musing fair? Perhaps not. For one thing Biden's odds of avoiding the reaper in the next half decade must be much better than the average 82-year-old's. He seems physically in good shape and doubtless gets the best medical monitoring and treatment available to anyone in the world. (And if it's any consolation, those actuarial tables are a fine example of Zeno's paradox: though your probability of dying increases each year, it is of course never 100 per cent, even if you live to be older than anyone who's ever lived.)

What's more, the word from those close to him is that he's up to the task. I spoke with a prominent and reliably honest senior Democratic figure this week who told me that he had seen Biden over the summer in small social settings and that he was, if not exactly razor-sharp, then certainly not the gibbering dementia patient he's portrayed to be — though claims by the 49-year-old press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre that she "can't keep up" with the 80-year-old president do smack a little of protesting too much.

> It has been an article of faith for Democrats that he can beat Trump

The problem with all this is that it requires people to believe that the Biden they see on their screens every day — mumbling, stumbling, falling off a bike, uttering baffling circumlocutions, drifting off to sleep — is not the real Joe Biden. Somehow, we are to think that the minute the cameras turn off, the real man emerges: alert, assertive, probing staff and visitors alike with detailed questions, performing prodigious feats of memory, bench-pressing 100lb weights in the White House gym.

Even if it were true it scarcely matters politically: it is an inescapable reality of electoral politics that voters give a verdict on the flawed man they see, not the avatar of mental and intellectual strength that supposedly exists behind the scenes.

Behind the renewed focus on Biden's age is a new political reality. For the past few years it has been an article of faith among Democrats that Biden is best placed to beat Donald Trump. He did it once and they believe, with the same choice on offer and now even more evidence of Trump's vices, that voters would surely pick him again.

But the polls now suggest otherwise. The escalating scandals over the business dealings and legal challenges of his son, Hunter, are beginning to hurt the president, limiting his ability to put clear moral ground between himself and Trump. With inflation stubbornly high and interest rates biting, Biden gets low marks from the public for his handling of the economy. The illegal immigration crisis that now grips cities like New York is laying bare the administration's abject failure to deal with the porous border.

All this, and voters are asked to choose a man they think is simply not up to the job. But you'd be unwise to think Biden won't run again. In the last century only one president, Calvin Coolidge, freely chose, without a nudge from the voters, not to seek a second full term.

"The presidential office takes a heavy toll of those who occupy it and those who are dear to them," Coolidge later wrote. "While we should not refuse to spend and be spent in the service of our country, it is hazardous to attempt what we feel is beyond our strength to accomplish."

He was just 56 at the time, yet was dead, as it happens, before he would have completed a second term. The only other presidents who turned down a second presidential run — Harry Truman and Lyndon Johnson — did so after suffering primary election setbacks.

So in the absence of such a stumble — an unlikely outcome — it seems that only the embalming fluid will keep Biden from raging, raging against the dying of the light.

Letters to the Editor

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letters@thetimes.co.uk or by post to
1 London Bridge Street, London SE1 9GF

Climate climbdown

Sir, Addressing the climate emergency is not a choice but an imperative, so it is hugely disappointing that key targets designed to reduce our carbon emissions and improve the energy efficiency of homes are being postponed or, in some cases, scrapped ("Sunak's green targets gamble", Sep 21). As well as putting net zero targets at risk, the scrapping of minimum energy efficiency standards for owner-occupied and privately rented properties will be incredibly costly for households, particularly those already in fuel poverty. Renters in England and Wales are set to waste £1.1 billion this year alone on energy that escapes from their homes through inadequate insulation and draughts.

The economic and energy security benefits of policies that improve home energy efficiency have been repeatedly proven. By contrast, the Office for Budget Responsibility has shown that dependence on gas imports could be twice as costly in debt as public investment in the transition to net zero.
Stew Horne
Head of policy, Energy Saving Trust

Sir, The reversal in climate change policy is another depressing example of a failure to set realistic goals. On one side there is a group of people with laser-like clarity for the greater problems of tomorrow but blind to the difficulties that today's leaders have in preparing for them. The other group can scarcely see tomorrow at all as they are up so to their necks in today. Until these two groups can talk to each other, one with understanding of the need for quicker change and the other with some concept of the practicalities, progress will be painfully slow.
Piers Ripley
Stansted, Essex

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Corrections and clarifications

● We wrongly said that British tourists need an international driving permit to drive in Spain (World News, Sep 16), although some fines have been issued in error by local police.

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Learning from the Swedish art of ageing well

Sir, Alice Thomson's important article highlights potential positive changes for older citizens ("Sweden can teach us the art of ageing well", Sep 20; letters, Sep 21). A whole new phase of life is waiting to be grasped but it has yet to be embraced in the UK. Although employment today is far less physically demanding than in the past, and medical advances now cure old-age illnesses, home-grown barriers to a better later-years lifestyle remain. Apart from endemic workplace ageism, social norms drive people to write themselves off in their late fifties or early sixties rather than reviewing how they want to work in the coming years.

Planning this new phase of life — which I call "pretirement" — could consider part-time work, retraining for a less stressful career, taking some leave to care for loved ones and then returning, before stopping work altogether. Two or three days a week working, four or five days free, can be rewarding mentally, physically and financially. Given an ageing population, pretirement would boost pensions, national output, living standards and wellbeing.
Baroness Altmann
Pensions minister 2015-16

Sir, We can't all move to Sweden but we can all learn from its attitude to ageing. The British too often think of it as a time of relief from work, unstructured and unplanned.
But those of us who are old already know that old age takes thought and intention. Otherwise, having lost our place in the world of work and the social structures that support it, old age risks being a time of depression and gloom. Everyone needs a sense of purpose, which is why old people benefit from finding some sort of work, with an actual pay packet. It may be only a few hours a week, a few pounds in your pocket. But it can make a lot of difference.
Baroness Bakewell
Former Voice of Older People

Sir, Sweden's understanding of how to maximise the strengths of an ageing population is excellent. However, I have volunteered for 20 years since I "retired" from paid work. This has included five years of nursing a sick and dying relative. This country's arrogant dismissal of contributions that do not have status and salary attached needs to be firmly challenged. Additionally, I have no desire to return to a workplace and be lectured on using the "wrong language" by some youngster.
Linda Hughes
Newton Abbot, Devon

Sir, May I warn against the Swedish custom of "death cleaning" on retirement? It is certainly a time for new activities but it cannot solve the problem of loneliness. In very old age, when all my friends are dead, support comes from memories and possessions, which remind one of the greatest and longest pleasures of life: friendship.
John Carder (age 92)
Anstruther, Fife

Sir, Alice Thomson is right that we need to become far more adept at maturing joyfully. As a 72-year-old, I have found that retirement (or "renaissance" as Sir Muir Gray calls it) has brought fulfilment, happiness, freedom, time, new friends and interests (including volunteering, my first book and the Argentine tango). Everyone can help us age better, from the government, the NHS, employers, organisations and charities to ourselves. Perhaps it is time for a Commissioner for Older People.
Maggy Pigott
Author of *How to Age Joyfully*

Doctors' strike and the care of patients

Sir, Further to Daniel Finkelstein's assertion that consultant doctors should be grateful for their lot ("Doctors' irresponsible strike cannot succeed", Sep 20) it is far too simplistic to compare consultant pay today with that of 30 years ago. Whichever way you look at it, consultants have endured stagnant wage growth against a backdrop of increasing living costs for many years, as Finkelstein himself acknowledges. This has been felt most acutely over the past 15 years: since 2008, ignoring inflation, consultant pay has only risen by 14 per cent in cash terms, while average pay for comparable professions such as law and engineering has increased by about 80 per cent.

Alongside this, after contractual changes in 2003, consultants are working very differently, providing more direct patient care and working longer hours. We are seeing more patients than ever as well as providing care under ever-challenging conditions fuelled by years of underinvestment. We are stretched to the limit and it is no wonder that some are choosing to leave for better pay and conditions elsewhere. We must reverse this decline: without enough doctors, patient care will inevitably suffer, but when the government chooses not to listen, we are left with no choice but to act.
Dr Vishal Sharma
Chairman, BMA consultants committee

Sir, Daniel Finkelstein's piece and your editorial (Sep 20; letters, Sep 21) were admirably clear and balanced. There can be no reasonable argument to excuse strike action by doctors. A basic tenet of medicine is "First do no harm". Undoubtedly, harm is being done to patients by in effect withholding care. Undeniably, working conditions in the NHS are now very difficult. Surely this is what needs to be addressed? Increasing salaries will not make the working day (or night) any easier.
Dr Dorcas Kingham
Retired consultant psychiatrist, Clifton, Bristol

Letters to The Times must be exclusive and may be edited. Please include a full address and daytime telephone number.

Building by the sea

Sir, Adam Hawksbee's bold plan to invigorate Britain's coastal towns was unfortunately timed ("Seaside towns hold the key to solving our housing crisis", Sep 21). The Surfers Against Sewage website, which highlights pollution alerts on beaches, this morning showed an almost continuous string of red warnings around our coastline. Until a long-term plan to fix our broken sewage system is approved many of these towns will continue to decline.
Stephen Hodges
London SE1

Sir, We live in Emsworth, which has been blighted by thousands of houses being built around us. It used to be easy to get out of our road but the traffic to these new homes means that the main road is now constantly blocked. Moreover, to get a doctor's appointment is nigh impossible and the local schools are now crammed.

Building homes by the seaside is a bad idea if the infrastructure is not established at the same time.
Christine Strode
Emsworth, Hants

THE NEW FASHION IN GARDEN ROSES

FROM THE TIMES SEPTEMBER 22, 1923

A glance through the pages of an old catalogue of roses shows how transient is the popularity of many garden roses. Comparatively few now varieties stand the test of time and, taking the selection list of the National Rose Society as a guide, we may search almost in vain for the champions of thirty years ago. Of 377 roses thought worthy of mention now, only 56 are more than 25 years old, and of these 22 are moss roses, sweet briars, and climbers. New hybrid bedding roses often run an erratic course, and after a brilliant beginning on the show bench, end on the garden rubbish heap. In our climate the garden test is severe, and to emerge from it successfully a rose must be superlatively good in colour, shape, foliage, and constitution. Fashion and the ceaseless desire for novelty no doubt account in some measure for the decline of this garden rose or that, but neither fashion nor novelty has any lasting influence on those whose love of plants and flowers is more than skin deep. In the hands of a keen gardener few really good things are banished except by accident, and a fine rose is not discarded for some petty fault. Sentiment apart, there can be little doubt that the garden roses of today are better than of old. There is a far wider choice of colour, form and habit, and the flowering season has been prolonged till it outlasts that of many perennial plants and flowering shrubs. One exquisite quality — fragrance — is too often missing, but thirty years ago such a display of rose bloom as is now to be seen would have been impossible. The great change in decorative roses is due to the evolution of the so-called hybrid perpetual rose, the result of the union of the French rose (R. gallica) and the cabbage rose (R. centifolia) with the rose of China (R. indica). Criticism is often fairly directed to the dubious colouring of many latter-day roses, the hot and streaky yellows, cloudy pinks, and reds which are neither scarlet nor crimson, to tints, in fact, of which even the rainbow is innocent. These are the inevitable result of the cross-breeding practised by the raisers of new roses, and if such things cannot be strangled at birth we may be sure their popularity will be fleeting. It is the clean, pure colours which refresh the eye again and again and stand the rigorous test of time.

THETIMES.CO.UK/ARCHIVE

Stonehenge scheme

Sir, You quote Unesco saying of the proposed Stonehenge works: "Over the years, the committee and the advisory bodies have been clear and consistent that the proposed A303 improvement scheme should not proceed in its current form" ("Change Stonehenge tunnel plans or don't do it at all, says Unesco", Sep 19). Over the years plans have been adjusted, at considerable extra cost, to respond to comments from Unesco, among others. It can continue to reject "current" plans indefinitely, but until it recognises that they include removing visible road from the world heritage site (more than would be built in it), its judgment remains unbalanced.
And contrary to your report, world heritage listing brings in no UN funds.
Mike Pitts
Author, *Digging up Britain*

Tortuous ruling

Sir, I read without surprise the view of Jonathan Hall KC, the government's independent terrorism reviewer, that Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps should not be proscribed as a terror group (Sep 20). Hall makes the strange argument that the IRGC is a "government department". In the past ten years the IRGC has used torture and has committed a litany of other human rights abuses, smuggled various goods and materials including oil, and provided training to Hamas and Hezbollah. The United States has designated the IRGC a foreign terrorist organisation. Is this the behaviour of a "government department"?
Oliver Webb-Carter
Editor, Aspects of History

Sanctioned outrage

Sir, Janice Turner states ("Star-struck leftie media gave Brand a free pass, Sep 21) that Russell Brand and Jonathan Ross humiliated Andrew Sachs's granddaughter Georgina Baillie "live on air". In fact their comments were pre-recorded and then cleared by the BBC for broadcast on Radio 2. It was the BBC's active approval of Ms Baillie's humiliation (to say nothing of her grandfather's) that ultimately turned this episode into front-page news.
Miles Goslett
London SW18

Fuel efficiency

Sir, Since a 20mph speed limit was introduced in Wales I have heard a number of people claim that it is more fuel efficient to drive at 30mph than 20mph (letter, Sep 19). First, the majority of a car's fuel is expended in accelerating to cruising speed. Second, when driving at 30mph I do so in fourth gear. I find that my car comfortably maintains 20mph in fourth gear also. Liz Truss herself could not have come up with a more specious piece of twaddle.
John Eales
Pembroke

Last orders

Sir, Funeral receptions (letters, Sep 18 & 20) were at one time held around the closed coffin of the deceased. In the episode of *Steptoe and Son* entitled "Oh, What a Beautiful Mourning", Albert pours himself a glass of stout on the casket of his late brother George and says: "That's the first drink I've ever had on him."
Dr John Burscough
Brigg, Lincs

Leading articles

Daily Universal Register

UK: ONS publishes an analysis of climate-related mortality and hospital admissions in England and Wales from 1988 to 2022.
Canada: President Zelensky is due to visit.

Nature notes



Although it rarely grows longer than 7mm, the alder leaf beetle often catches the eye. The insect's violet-black body has a metallic quality that glints even in dull light; its segmented antennae are expressive. As its name suggests, the alder leaf beetle primarily leads its life among alder trees, though it will also inhabit downy birch, goat willow and hazel. The species lay their eggs on the underside of leaves. The larvae then eat the leaves. Before reaching maturity, the larvae go through three separate physical forms, or instars. Once very rare, even presumed to be extinct in Britain from the 1940s onwards, they have become common since 2004. No one knows why.
JONATHAN TULLOCH

Birthdays today



Nick Jones, *pictured*, restaurateur, founder, Soho House private members' club, 60; **Alex Aiken**, executive director for government communications (Cabinet Office), 57; **Andrea Bocelli**, operatic tenor, 65; **Sir Robert Buckland KC**, Conservative MP for South Swindon, secretary of state for Wales (2022), 55; **John Caird**, theatre director and writer, *Brief Encounter*, an opera (2007), *Les Misérables* (2012), 75; **Nick Cave**, musician, *The Mercy Seat* (1988), and writer, 66; **Roberta Fleet**, lord-lieutenant for West Glamorgan, 69; **Dr Liam Fox**, Conservative MP for North Somerset, international trade secretary and president of the Board of Trade (2016-19), 62; **Thomas Harris**, writer, the Hannibal Lecter series, 83; **Chesney Hawkes**, singer, *The One and Only* (1991), 52; **John L Hennessy**, computer scientist, chairman of Alphabet (Google's parent company), 71; **Isaac Herzog**, president of Israel, 63; **Philip Hindes**, track cyclist, two-time Olympic gold medallist (2012, 2016), 31; **Joan Jett**, rock musician, *I Love Rock 'n' Roll* (1982), 65; **Ruth Jones**, writer and actress, *Gavin & Stacey* (2007-10), *Stella* (2012-17), 57; **Rebecca Long-Bailey**, Labour MP for Salford & Eccles, shadow education secretary (2020), 44; **Baroness (Ruth) Lea of Lymm**, political economist, 76; **Ant Middleton**, adventurer, TV presenter, *SAS: Who Dares Wins* (2015-21), and former soldier, 43; **Rupert Penry-Jones**, actor, *Vita & Virginia* (2018), 53; **Sue Perkins**, comedian and broadcaster, *The Great British Bake Off* (2010-16), 54; **Captain Mark Phillips**, equestrian trainer and the former husband of the Princess Royal, 75; **Billie Piper**, actress, *I Hate Suzie* (2020-22), 41; **Will Sharpe**, actor, *Defending the Guilty* (2018-19), *The White Lotus* (2022), writer and director, *Flowers* (2016-18), 37; **Sir John Tomlinson**, operatic bass, president, Royal Northern College of Music, 77.

On this day

In **1989** the International Paralympic Committee was founded, "to enable Paralympic athletes to achieve sporting excellence and inspire and excite the world".

The last word

"My disability is that I cannot use my legs. My handicap is your negative perception of that disability, and thus of me." Rick Hansen, Canadian wheelchair athlete, in *Rick Hansen: Man in Motion* (1987)

Climate Costs

Achieving net zero emissions requires heavy expense and difficult trade-offs. Politicians should be candid about these and rigorously scrutinise the policy details

It is established fact that the planet has warmed by around 1.2C since the Industrial Revolution owing to human activities. Deliberate interventions to contain the rise in average temperatures to 1.5C are needed to prevent irreversible climate change. These mere truisms do not end the debate on environmental policy, nor do they preclude the need for one. The vehement response this week to Rishi Sunak's modest abridgements of government policy to attain net zero carbon emissions suggests that critical scrutiny is in short supply.

On environmental policy, the institutions of British democracy are not performing as they ought to. All the parties declare their ambition to curb emissions, yet few parliamentarians involve themselves in the minutiae of effective action to mitigate climate change. Underlying this lack of interest is a culpable unwillingness to acknowledge that stringent policies have costs, and politicians should be open about these.

In 2018 a seminal UN report set out the huge environmental costs if average temperatures were to reach 2C above pre-industrial levels rather than the 1.5C limit that world leaders committed themselves to under the 2015 Paris accord. A mere handful of MPs attended a Commons debate on climate change just a few months afterwards. An emergency climate briefing given last year at Westminster by Sir Patrick Vallance, the government's chief scientific adviser at the time, secured an audience of around 70 MPs and peers.

It cannot be supposed that parliamentarians are collectively expert on climate science. The likelihood is they are committing to restrictive measures, and pledging vast sums in investment in renewables, because they feel they ought to rather than through a detailed assessment of costs and benefits. That is no way to approach climate policy.

The prime minister is being faulted, by some Conservatives as well as by the opposition, not because he is heedless of the environment but because he is honest about these costs. The amount of carbon in the atmosphere is rising remorselessly; the sole downward blip in recent years was due to the shutdown of the global economy amid the pandemic. This does not mean governments are powerless to act, but candour about pressures on living standards is required.

Even good policies have costs: free trade, for example, typically raises real incomes but also causes some people to lose their jobs. Boris Johnson, who has said that Mr Sunak "cannot afford to falter" on net zero, famously described his Brexit philosophy as having his cake and eating it. The witticism obscured the fact that the benefits of Brexit (regulatory sovereignty) are accompanied by costs (notably, barriers to trade). And the same is true of ambitious targets for attaining net zero. The urgency of curbing emissions is not in dispute, but to depict such policies as pure gain is fanciful.

Labour has a responsibility to reflect seriously on environmental policy ahead of a 2024 election that it is likely to win. It shows scant sign of doing so. On the contrary, it advances a "prosperity plan" that will "see the state make public investments in industries that are vital to Britain's future success". The likelihood that civil servants know better than the markets which technologies are economically viable is vanishingly small. Labour's programme is a recipe for wasteful public spending.

Green policies entail difficult trade-offs; depicting these as a route to an economic renaissance is to ensure disappointment. Transforming home heating, for example, will require importing world-leading equipment.

Climate policy is far too important for the main parties to allow bold pledges to pass into law with only nominal review. It is to be hoped that Sunak's welcome dose of realism will be a wake-up call for legislators who backed onerous measures against the public with a pitiful amount of scrutiny.

Against the Grain

Poland's falling out with Ukraine over cereal shipments benefits no one but Putin

Poland is a lifeline for Ukraine. Itself a victim of Russian aggression over the centuries, the former Soviet satellite turned member of the European Union and Nato has been in the forefront of efforts to prevent its neighbour from being overwhelmed by the invading forces of Vladimir Putin. As Soviet-era weapons from Polish stocks have flowed east across the border to bolster Ukrainian forces, so Ukrainian grain and other foodstuffs have flowed the other way. These overland grain shipments, together with consignments routed through Hungary and Slovakia, have allowed Kyiv to circumvent Russian attempts to blockade its Black Sea ports. The Polish city of Rzeszów is also the main hub for Nato arms shipments to Ukraine. Deprived of Polish help, Ukraine's already precarious situation would be infinitely more perilous.

So Warsaw's announcement that it is ceasing weapons transfers to Kyiv following a war of words over the effect of Ukrainian grain imports on Polish farmers is of great concern. The rift may turn out to be mere political posturing on the part of Poland's Law and Justice party, which is facing a general election next month and is anxious to appease a farming lobby angry at what it regards as Ukrainian grain dumping. But the fact that domestic political and commercial considerations can so easily sour military ties between Ukraine and one of its most important backers will provide unwarranted comfort to Mr Putin, who has been hoping for cracks to appear in the formidable coalition ranged against him.

Both sides in this unedifying row have been guilty of intemperate language and behaviour. On Tuesday Andrzej Duda, the president of Poland, compared Ukraine to a "drowning person … extremely dangerous, capable of pulling you down to the depths". This swipe was bound to cause offence in Ukraine, which is all too aware of its reliance on other powers for its continuing survival. Protectionist Poland, Hungary and Slovakia have closed their markets to Ukrainian grain, violating EU single market rules. This provoked Volodymyr Zelensky, the president of Ukraine, to report the three to the World Trade Organisation.

Both countries need to dial down the rhetoric and restore calm. Poland's ruling politicians should not be using an embattled ally as a bogeyman in an acrimonious electoral contest involving populist parties vying with each other for the farming vote. At the same time Ukraine should acknowledge that too much of its grain exports may be lodging in central Europe instead of heading for markets further afield.

In addition to substantial military support from Poland, Ukraine owes a huge debt to its neighbour for accepting more than a million Ukrainian refugees, many welcomed into Polish homes. That spirit of generosity,which prevailed in the wake of the Russian invasion, shows signs of waning. A recent survey of Poles showed support for Ukrainian refugees — which stood at 91 per cent at the start of the war — falling to 69 per cent. Poland's far-right Confederation group is hoping to capitalise on this unease, hence the Law and Justice party's playing to the gallery.

This is a worrying trend. In the past President Zelensky has referred to Poland as Ukraine's "sister". The two countries have extensive common interests and face a shared threat. They should not allow the collateral effects of a war now deep into its second year to cloud this essential truth.

Brilliant Simplicity

Lord Bragg's In Our Time represents public service broadcasting at its finest

Lord Reith, the first director-general of the BBC, famously distilled the corporation's mission as being to "inform, educate and entertain". The last of these three imperatives one imagines being added as a rather grudging concession at the time; today it is invariably the second that is hardest to find on the airwaves. For the last 25 years, however, there has remained one outpost in the schedule still governed by the elevated Reithian ideal: *In Our Time*, which yesterday morning broadcast its 1,000th edition.

On its face, it would be easy to dismiss the Radio 4 programme as a throwback: a 45-minute encounter between three academics called into Broadcasting House to speak in learned conference on a subject of mutual interest, overseen by an accomplished arts broadcaster turned peer of the realm. But this simple format has proved an enduring success. The eclectic range of topics discussed, and available in the show's online archive — photosynthesis, the South Sea bubble, Iris Murdoch, Kant's categorical imperative, neutrinos and the science of glass among them — is a remarkable exercise in public education.

That the programme is the most downloaded podcast globally of any produced by the BBC, and one of the most popular among listeners under 35, is a standing rebuke to fashionable and faddish approaches to broadcasting. Melvyn Bragg makes no attempt to make his subjects artificially 'relevant' to contemporary concerns. His show seeks neither to patronise nor ingratiate itself with its audience. It does not reinvent the subjects it discusses, nor take the listener on a 'journey'. Nor do the experts engage in the frustrating pretence that they are learning along with the audience.

Instead, *In Our Time* respects its listeners as serious, intelligent people wishing only to be enlightened and surprised. It is the BBC at its simple best.

World

Poland halts arms supplies to Ukraine in row over grain

Poland

Paulina Olszanka Wroclaw
Tom Parfitt

Poland announced yesterday that it would stop sending weapons to Ukraine in a row over grain supplies.

Warsaw has been one of Ukraine's staunchest allies. Its decision has exposed a new rift in western unity over support to Kyiv. Mateusz Morawiecki, Poland's prime minister, said the move would enable his country to focus on upgrading its own military.

"We are no longer transferring any weapons to Ukraine because now we will arm ourselves with the most modern weapons," he told the private TV broadcaster Polsat News on Wednesday night.

Poland has sent more than 300 Soviet-era tanks, 14 MiG-29 fighter jets and 100 armoured personnel carriers to Ukraine. It also supplied Kyiv with 14 German-made Leopard 2 tanks, rocket launchers, artillery guns, surface-to-air missiles, a dozen helicopters and other weapons.

Morawiecki was criticised for the decision yesterday as his right-wing government fights a hotly contested campaign before elections next month.

Donald Tusk, the former prime minister who was president of the European Council, accused him and others of "stabbing Ukraine in the back politically … just because it will be profitable for their campaign".

The dispute will add to concerns in Kyiv that support from abroad is appearing more fragile. President Zelensky met US congressional leaders and President Biden in Washington, where a faction of the Republican Party is increasingly opposed to America paying for Ukraine's war effort.

Piotr Mueller, a Polish government spokesman, said that existing military contracts for arms and ammunition would be honoured. He appeared to confirm a link between the end of weapons transfer to Kyiv and the grain dispute, referring to "a series of absolutely unacceptable statements and diplomatic gestures … on the Ukrainian side.

Arms to Ukraine

Commitments to Ukraine made by donors for arms and equipment

Donor	Commitment
US	€42.10bn
EU Total	€40.30bn
Germany	€17.09bn
UK	€6.58bn
Norway	€3.69bn
Denmark	€3.50bn
Poland	€3.00bn
Netherlands	€2.48bn
Canada	€1.66bn
Sweden	€1.47bn

Zelensky angered Polish politicians on Wednesday when he told the UN general assembly in New York that "some in Europe" were making a "thriller from the grain" and "helping set the stage to a Moscow actor".

Agricultural products account for 12 per cent of Ukraine's exports. After Russia blocked trade through the Black Sea, Kyiv became increasingly dependent on land routes through the European Union, allowing it to reach markets in Africa and the Middle East.

The switch flooded grain into central Europe, where farmers held protests, saying that they were being undercut by cheap supplies from Ukraine.

The 27 members of the EU agreed this year on restrictions of grain from Ukraine entering Hungary, Poland and Slovakia. They did not extend the measure when it expired last week.

The governments in Budapest, Warsaw and Bratislava defied the European Commission's move and introduced restrictions. Poland fears the impact on its grain prices, complaining that the exports are absorbed into the local market. Prices dipped drastically in Poland before the EU ban.

Zelensky said on Monday that Ukraine would sue Poland, along with Slovakia and Hungary, for illegally imposing the bans. At the UN meeting in New York, President Duda of Poland likened Ukraine's threat to a "drowning person who is grasping at everything".

He said his country had a duty to "protect itself". Warsaw also said yesterday it would no longer provide aid to Ukrainian refugees within its borders.

The row represents a sharp decline in relations between the two countries, which have maintained a close alliance since Russia began its invasion.

Poland has been instrumental in securing aid and military equipment for Ukraine, often lobbying other European leaders. It has allowed more than a million refugees to settle with access to free education and healthcare.

The people are overwhelmingly pro-Ukrainian, with Poles donating £1.7 billion of their money to their neighbour's cause in the first six months of the war.

Many Poles opened up their homes and the political discourse about Ukrainian migrants has been overwhelmingly positive. But Warsaw's government is increasingly seeking to distract voters from a number of domestic scandals as it prepares for elections next month.

It is concerned that its traditional rural voters will respond to falling grain prices by defecting to other populist parties, such as the new AgroUnia party that targets disaffected farmers.

A US government official said in Brussels that Washington expected Poland would still retain its leading role and Morawiecki's statements were simply "messaging" linked to domestic politics.

Falling out benefits no one but Putin, leading article, page 31



Beijing rolls out the red carpet for Assad before dinner and games

China

Richard Spencer China Correspondent

Beijing paid tribute to President Assad of Syria yesterday as he arrived for his first trip to China since the outbreak of his country's civil war 12 years ago.

Assad and his wife, Asma, landed in the eastern city of Hangzhou, where he is due to attend the opening of the Asian Games with other leaders tomorrow. He will join them to be fêted at a dinner hosted by President Xi tonight after what the foreign ministry in Beijing called "in-depth talks" with the Chinese leader.

China did not become involved in the long war, but along with Russia provided Assad with substantial diplomatic cover, vetoing resolutions against him at the United Nations eight times.

The invitation to Assad is part of a wider outreach by China to the Arab world, which Beijing is presenting as a stabilising force in comparison with the "war-mongering" of the United States.

The foreign ministry pointed out that Syria was one of the first countries to recognise China's Communist government after its own revolutionary war.

"Over the 67 years since the establishment of diplomatic relations, the relationship between China and Syria has maintained healthy and stable development," Mao Ning, a spokeswoman, said. "President Bashar al-Assad personally attaches great importance to the development of China-Syria relations."

Assad previously visited China in 2004, four years after he inherited Syria's presidency from his father, Hafez. Much has changed in both countries since. China was focused on its own economic development, but Assad was attempting to open up Syria after the hermit-like rule of his father. There were fledgling attempts to introduce Chinese businesses into Damascus.

Chinese oil and petrochemical companies invested several billion dollars in Syria, and trading entrepôts were set up in Damascus for Chinese goods. That came to an end as Assad used extreme force to repress an uprising against his rule in 2011, leading to eight years of heavy conflict in which at least half a million people died. Syrian cities were devastated by regime barrel bombs and gas attacks and half the population was forced into internal or external exile.

Assad is hoping that China will lead foreign investment efforts in the face of western sanctions. Last year he signed Syria up to China's "Belt and Road Initiative", which has invested heavily in infrastructure across Eurasia and Africa.

Russia and Iran, while they rescued the regime militarily, have been unable or unwilling to provide financial support. Beijing has expanded its trade with both countries despite heavy western sanctions. However, China benefited from that trade, with the sanctions allowing it to buy natural resources, mainly oil and gas, from Russia and Iran at cut prices. Assad has little to offer China and while his shattered cities are crying out for investment to help them to rebuild, continuing violence makes the chance of a good return unpredictable.

In recent weeks, there have been renewed protests, particularly in the Druze-majority city of Sweida in the south, which stayed out of the war.

China's outreach to Syria is likely to be political, as Xi sets himself clearly on the geopolitical side of Russia, Iran and allies like Syria against America and the West. It is also promoting itself as a peace-builder, especially in the Middle East, where it helped Saudi Arabia and Iran to broker a reconciliation agreement, signed in Beijing.

Capote's lost story of sun, sea and tricks is found
Page 35

Police raid uncovers disco and zoo in gang-run jail
Page 36



EVAN VUCCI/AP; VALENTYN OGIRENKO/REUTERS; STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE OF UKRAINE



President Zelensky, in military fatigues, met President Biden in the White House yesterday to discuss support for his country as Kyiv recovered from a wave of Russian airstrikes. Emergency services carried casualties to hospital after missiles hit a hotel in the city of Cherkasy, central Ukraine



Stay united and strong, Zelensky tells US senators

Hugh Tomlinson, Alistair Dawber
Washington

President Zelensky urged the United States to "stay unified and stay strong" behind his country yesterday, warning that Ukraine would lose the war with Russia if its support ceased.

Zelensky, who was making his second wartime visit to Capitol Hill, met President Biden at the White House and confronted Republican sceptics who have demanded an end to US military aid for Ukraine.

Speaking in the Oval Office, Zelensky thanked Biden for America's support in Ukraine's fight to "combat Russian terror". He added: "I'm in Washington to strengthen our coalition to defend Ukrainian children, our families, our homes, freedom and democracy in the world."

Biden lauded the courage of the Ukrainian people and said the US remained committed to finding a "just and lasting peace, one that respects Ukraine's sovereignty and integrity".

When Zelensky was asked what assurances he had received from Congress that Kyiv could continue to rely on American support. Biden interrupted and said, "There is no alternative."

The White House is seeking $24 billion in additional aid for Ukraine but faces determined opposition from a growing faction of hardline Republicans in Congress. Before Zelensky's arrival, six Republican senators issued a joint letter declaring that "enough is enough", vowing to block all future funding for Ukraine.

Zelensky, wearing military-style fatigues, received a warm welcome as he arrived on Capitol Hill, but the political environment in Washington has changed since his historic address to a joint session of Congress in December.

This time, the president faced tough questions about Ukraine's hopes of victory as a counteroffensive against Russia struggled to make headway. Addressing all 100 members of the Senate, the Ukrainian leader urged the US to stay the course.

"When this war started, you said to me: 'Ukraine, stay unified and stay strong'," he told the senators. "I'm coming back and saying to the United States: 'Stay unified and stay strong.'"

Asked how Americans could be convinced they were not being dragged into another lengthy foreign conflict, Zelensky said: "Giving in to Putin is the thing that creates the forever war."

Chuck Schumer, Democratic Senate leader, said Zelensky told him: "If we don't get the aid, we will lose the war."

Congress has approved more than $100 billion in aid to Ukraine since Russia invaded last year, including more than $40 billion in weapons.

The latest tranche has become embroiled in a row over government spending among Republicans in the House of Representatives.

US national security adviser Jake Sullivan said the meeting between Biden and Zelensky came as Ukrainian forces made progress in their counter-offensive and after a wave of Russian airstrikes hit five cities, damaging infrastructure and knocking out power.

"To help defend against assaults like this … President Biden will announce a new package that includes significant air defence capabilities," Sullivan said.

This package is believed to be funded by money set aside and approved for Ukraine, separate from the additional $24 billion being sought.

Zelensky received a standing ovation from senators but got a frosty reception on the other side of Capitol Hill. Kevin McCarthy, the Republican House Speaker, held a separate meeting with him and other politicians.

McCarthy is under pressure from hardliners loyal to Donald Trump, who have called for aid to Ukraine to be diverted to domestic issues. Trump has criticised Biden for pouring billions of dollars into the defence of Ukraine.

Matt Gaetz, a Florida congressman leading the Republican rebellion, said all he wanted to hear from Zelensky was that "he's sending our money back".

Biden won't budge but he's becoming a liability, Gerard Baker, page 29

India suspends visas for Canadians in dispute after Sikh's death

India
Amrit Dhillon Delhi

India has accused Canada of being a "safe haven for terror" and has suspended visa services for all its citizens, in a growing row.

The two nations have become embroiled in an increasingly bitter diplomatic spat over the killing of a Canadian citizen in June.

Arindam Bagchi, spokesman for India's Ministry of External Affairs, did not mince his words when addressing a statement by Justin Trudeau, the Canadian prime minister, that Ottawa had "credible allegations" linking India to the murder of a Sikh separatist, Hardeep Singh Nijjar, near Vancouver.

"We are willing to look at specific information provided to us but so far have received nothing," Bagchi said of Ottawa's lack of communication. "I do think there is a degree of prejudice here… To us, it seems that these allegations are primarily politically driven."

The suggestion of a political motivation is an allusion to the belief in some quarters of India that Trudeau is trying to win popularity among Sikh Canadians by backing their cause, if only implicitly, and by not taking action against Sikh extremist groups.

When asked whether the allegations had damaged India's reputation, he used the kind of undiplomatic words normally reserved for neighbour and bitter rival Pakistan. "If any country should be worried about reputational damage, it is Canada for a growing reputation for providing a safe haven for terrorism, extremism, and organised crime," he said.

Bagchi said Trudeau had mentioned the allegations to Narendra Modi, India's prime minister, at the recent G20 meeting in Delhi and that Modi had rejected them as false. Later India called the charge "absurd and motivated".

Both countries have expelled one diplomat each since the row broke out but more are likely to follow. Bagchi said Canada would have to further reduce the size of its diplomatic mission in India for the sake of parity as its presence far exceeded that of India's in Canada. India is also suspending visa services in Canada. "For now, the security situation in Canada and because of Canadian government inaction, we have stopped visa services temporarily," he said.

The move comes a day after India issued a travel advisory urging its citizens in Canada to exercise caution because of "politically condoned hate crimes and criminal violence".

Already bad, relations have now plunged into acrimony, with both countries trying to persuade allies to circle the wagons. Bagchi made clear that India had been in touch with "partners and friends" to counter the allegations, but refused to name them.

Nijjar's death may have caused the recent tension, but the row has deeper roots as India has long called for Canada to take action to curb the activities of Sikh separatists. Their self-avowed goal is to break up India and carve out an independent Sikh homeland in Punjab.

Bagchi said India had repeatedly provided information about separatist groups out to harm Delhi's interests but that it had not been acted upon.

Pankaj Saran, a former deputy national security adviser, wrote in a column for The Economic Times: "The net result of the last many years of the dialogue of the deaf is that today the India-Canada relationship is on the verge of collapse … Canada, like Pakistan, cannot allow its soil to be used to destabilise India."







ZUMA PRESS, EUROPA PRESS/MEGA

Royal artillery Princess Leonor, 17, the heir to the Spanish throne, has completed her basic military training in Zaragoza. She will spend a year in each branch of her nation's armed forces — as did her father, King Felipe

Right-wing views are on the rise in Germany

Germany
David Crossland Berlin

One in 12 Germans hold extremist right-wing views that include trivialising the Nazis, a poll has found.

That proportion has risen sharply since the last survey of its type was conducted two years ago by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES), a centre-left political think tank associated with the Social Democratic Party, and the UADS Institute in Duisburg.

The poll, of just over 2,000 people during January and February this year, found that 8 per cent of those surveyed could be defined as far right, agreeing with statements such as "the influence of the Jews is still too big today" and "the crimes of national socialism have been grossly exaggerated in the writing of history".

The two institutions conduct and interpret the survey every two years. Last time only between 2 and 3 per cent of those surveyed held such views.

One of the authors of the study, Beate Küpper, blamed a general sense of uncertainty caused by the cost of living crisis, the Ukraine war and global warming for the trend, even though many people did not feel personally affected by those problems.

She added that more people in Germany were openly professing to being politically right-wing. "We have a new norm of what one can now not only think but also say and do." This was reflected in the high levels of hate crime being recorded.

The survey echoes a surge in support for the hard-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) party.

Chinese MeToo campaigner goes on trial for 'subversion'

China
Richard Spencer China Correspondent

China's leading MeToo campaigner and a labour rights organiser will go on trial for incitement to subversion today in the latest sign of government attempts to stamp out activism.

Sophia Huang Xueqin, 35, wrote about leaving a newspaper after being harassed by a senior male reporter who had been assigned to train her. She took up other cases and her campaigning made headlines around the world.

She was supported by labour rights activists, including Wang Jianbing, 40, who championed workers who had suffered occupational diseases.

Women's rights campaigners say the pair's arrest has had a chilling effect on the MeToo movement and social activism in general in China.

Feng Yuan, co-founder of Beijing Weiping Helpline for Women, said the officials might have imagined a major case "manipulated by foreign forces".

She added: "The relevant authorities always suspect that grassroots activists and women's rights advocates are not aiming to improve real issues in China but are seen as potentially dangerous individuals."

Huang won a scholarship under the British government's Chevening scheme to study at Sussex University in 2021. She was seized by police in Guangzhou two years ago the day before she was leave to catch her flight from Hong Kong. Wang, who had intended to accompany her to Hong Kong, was arrested at the same time.

For several weeks it was not clear what had happened to them. Their families were later told they were being held for "incitement to subversion".

Their apartments were searched and their diaries and personal papers taken away. Campaigners said the charges against them had been "trumped up" and alleged that they have been held in solitary confinement for long periods and subjected to a variety of abuses.



Sophia Huang Xueqin wrote of being harassed

Cédric Alviani, of Reporters Without Borders, said: "The prolonged detention without a trial of Huang Xueqin … demonstrates the determination of the Chinese government to silence all remaining independent voices."

The MeToo campaign caused a moral dilemma for the Communist Party, founded in part on a promise of sex equality. In the past 20 years its rule has become more liberal in personal matters and state media have reported on cases of alleged sexual harassment.

Some women who spoke about their experiences, however, were treated harshly. Peng Shuai, one of China's most successful women's tennis players, said in 2021 that she had been coerced into sex by Zhang Guoli, a former vice-premier.

Peng's social media post describing their relationship was removed and she disappeared for several months.

President Xi has shown few signs of supporting women's equality movements. The politburo he appointed last October was the first in 25 years to have no woman sitting in it.

Huang was tolerated when she wrote about her personal experiences and helped others to do the same.

She came under suspicion when she also started writing about the 2019 protests in Hong Kong against a Beijing-imposed national security law. She was detained for three months for "provoking troubles", an offence in China.

The hearing today is certain to find the pair guilty. The judicial authorities have not published an indictment and it is unclear what sentence they are likely to receive. Feng said the best hope was for "less outrageous charges and a relatively swift release".

Kim's women have their luxury styles in the bag

North Korea
Richard Lloyd Parry Asia Editor

Secret police in North Korea are mobilised to stamp out decadent foreign influences such as films, television and even haircuts. But the rules do not apply to the women around Kim Jong-un, the country's leader.

Photographs of his recent visit to meet President Putin in eastern Russia show his sister and his foreign minister carrying European handbags banned in North Korea under international sanctions. Kim's former girlfriend who serves as his head of protocol is an exception, however. She has to make do with a cheap Chinese brand.

The NK News website has studied the photographs from Kim's week in Russia and found that the women in his entourage tried to make a good impression on their hosts. Choe Son-hui, 59, his foreign minister, is an experienced diplomat well known for her heavy smoking and ability to out-drink her male colleagues. During a visit to an aviation plant in Komsomolsk-on-Amur, she carried a vintage Zumi bag by Gucci, which sells secondhand online for £8,100.

Kim Yo-jong, 35, the leader's sister regarded as one of the most powerful people in the country, carried a Lady Dior calfskin bag that costs £5,600 new. By contrast, Hyon Song-wol, 46, a former pop star rumoured to be Kim's old flame, had a bag made in China that sells for £7.

At home, North Korean officials pursue a campaign against "decadent culture", such as dyeing of hair and drinking parties as well as films, TV dramas and news programmes, especially those from South Korea.

Senior members of the regime, however, are well known for their appetite for foreign luxuries. And no expenses were spared on Kim's visit to Russia in his armoured train. The carriages were believed to have been decked out with rows of pink leather sofas, a karaoke room and cases of fine French wine.

The train has pulled one of Kim's Mercedes-Benz limousines and even a helicopter for emergency escapes.



Kim Yo-jong was seen with a £5,600 Lady Dior bag as she accompanied her brother, Kim Jong-un, to Russia

Rome's first great imperial palace reopens after half a century

Italy

James Imam Milan

Emperors once strode through its frescoed corridors, peering from the Palatine Hill over ancient Rome below. Now, the sprawling Domus Tiberiana, the first great imperial palace in Rome, has been reopened to the public after being closed for 50 years.

The palace once spread over 4 hectares, with the emperors Caligula, Claudius and Nero living there. Today, it is recognisable for its arches that tower over the Roman Forum, the site of processions, elections and criminal trials. After a 30-year renovation, there is now an exhibition in seven rooms.

It represents the latest landmark to open at the Colosseum's vast archaeological park — the world's largest ancient complex within a modern city.

"We are restoring this asset to entire generations who have not been able to appreciate it," Gennaro Sangiuliano, the Italian culture minister, said at the opening of the Domus. "It is an important monument to our national identity and we will invest more and more in it."

Scholars believe the palace was built by Tiberius, Augustus's successor, in the 1st century AD.

"This was the first great imperial palace," Sergio Rinaldi Tufi, an archaeologist at the University of Urbino, said. "Augustus lived in much more modest surroundings."

The palace was destroyed in the great fire that razed much of Ancient Rome in AD64. Nero rebuilt it, commissioning frescoes and statues. After falling into disrepair, the palace was incorporated into sumptuous gardens built by the Farnese dynasty in the 16th century in a grand evocation of imperial splendour. Archaeologists unearthed the site in the 1960s and 1970s before closing it because of structural problems. Experts have painstakingly shored up the site and carried out additional excavation work over the past 30 years.

Alfonsina Russo, the Colosseum's director, said: "Now citizens and visitors from around the world will be able to enjoy these spaces."

BETTMANN, CBS, ANITA BONITA/GETTY IMAGES



Capote's lost story of sun, sea and tricks comes to light

United States

Will Pavia New York

The story was written in pencil in a red and gold notebook that Truman Capote bought in Venice at Italy's oldest paper shop, the Legatoria Piazzesi, an ancient little place with a faded blue and white sign.

A researcher who found the notebook in Capote's papers and began to read it was transported to a mountain villa in Sicily where a Miss Iris Greentree sits with her morning cup of coffee and contemplates with great bitterness the gorgeousness of the landscape all around her. "Help! Help!" she says to herself. "Another day in paradise."

Entitled *Another Day In Paradise*, the short story is being published for the first time by The Strand Magazine.

"I think it's very, very good," Laurence Leamer, a biographer of Capote, said after looking at it yesterday. "Usually when they find stuff like this, there's a reason it wasn't published. But this deserves to be [considered] an important part of his work."

Andrew Gulli, managing editor of The Strand, said it came to light a few months ago when he was looking for new works by the novelist James M Cain in the Library of Congress. He asked the researcher he had hired to search through Capote's papers too.

"I had very little expectations of finding anything," he said. Capote was not "like some of the pulp writers … who have 100 stories, 200 stories," he said. So when the researcher found the story "I was very surprised," he said.

It was written in pencil and parts of it were hard to decipher. Louisa Jordan, the magazine's fiction editor, spent hours "poring over Capote's handwriting, deciphering his Italian and hunting down obscure Sicilian words", Gulli wrote, in an editorial.

Its heroine, Miss Greentree, had forsaken marriage to serve as her mother's secretary, travelling companion and nurse. Upon her mother's death she is left "a grim, gabled, twenty room house in a suburb of Philadelphia". She sells it and ups sticks to a cheap corner of Sicily, to the village of Taros, where she is beguiled by Signor Carlo, who persuades her to spend all her savings on a patch of mountainside he owns and to pay him, at an extortionate rate, to build upon it La Bella Vista.

Then he drops her to devote his charms to other new arrivals. The locals say she has been jilted but "she had never been in love with the man: worse — she'd trusted him", Capote writes. She had thought herself in paradise, but "as Signor Carlo's betrayal grew apparent, it was as though a magician had shown her the secret of his art: Taros became an explained trick, a snare of sun and air …" And she is trapped there.

Sitting with her coffee, she cries for help, "blinking her eyes against the stark, once-blissful sun that burned in a sky of idiotic blue", bitterly contemplating almond trees "snowily flowering in the immaculate sunshine", and not even wanting to glance to her left at Mount Etna, "its eternal smoke spiralling skyward".



Truman Capote wrote Breakfast at Tiffany's, the film of which starred Audrey Hepburn as Holly Golightly. Capote knew Sicily, particularly the seaside town of Taormina, very well

Leamer, who wrote *Capote's Women: a true story of love, betrayal, and a swan song for an era*, said that Capote, who may be best known for the novella *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, "basically was a miniaturist" and a natural short story writer. In this one, "the sense of detail is extraordinary, the right detail, whatever it is", he said. "He just understood it so well, and he knew Sicily."



Capote, like his heroine, had sailed for Sicily on a Norwegian ship in 1950 with his partner, Jack Dunphy, to Taormina and a villa called Fontana Vecchia, a pink house on a hillside, like the villa in his short story.

"I don't think he's ever written about that part of his life before," Leamer said. "Certainly not in this way. It made me realise once again what a great writer he was. You see what we lost with his early death."

French couple tie the knot with Big Macs and raised eyebrows

France

Adam Sage Paris

A French couple served McDonald's hamburgers at their wedding reception to mixed reactions, exposing the country's ambiguous appetite for fast food.

Thomas Billaudeau, 27, and his wife, Ophélie, 25, ordered more than 300 hamburgers, wraps, nuggets and other items from the local branch of the American chain to feed their guests when they got married at the weekend.

In a country that likes to regard itself as the cradle of fine gastronomy, the absence of such delicacies as foie gras went down badly with some of the more traditionalist members of the family, according to the bride.

But most guests were delighted, she said. When the groom posted a video of the reception on TikTok, it went viral, attracting more than 1.5 million views.

The groom, a photographer, and the bride, a marketing assistant, said they had opted for a low-cost wedding. The couple are from Paris but got married in Beauvais, more than 60 miles to the north of the capital, because it was cheaper.

Mrs Billaudeau told Le Parisien newspaper: "We looked at the price of some caterers but I am a fussy eater. I was afraid that we were going to pay for something that we did not like. If you are going to pay, you may as well get something you like."

The couple began planning for the wedding in March, when they asked the Beauvais-Tillé branch of McDonald's if it could feed the reception guests.

The chain said it was unused to receiving such big orders, which involved a "particular mobilisation". It was reported that it cost more than €1,000.

"We were a bit afraid of the reaction of some aunts and uncles," the bride said. "They were a bit hurt at first but in the end everyone ate."

It is much the same story in wider French society. McDonald's faced hostility from traditionalists after opening its first outlet in the country in 1972. Some critics said it was an assault of gastronomy. But the chain now has more than 1,500 outlets in France, with registered sales last year of more than €6 billion.

Its success is contributing to a boom in the fast food sector as a whole, which had revenue of more than €23 billion across the country last year, the newspaper Le Figaro reported.

In some countries, such as Indonesia, McDonald's is seeking to compete in the wedding market with offers to provide food for receptions for as little as $200. In France, however, there had been no such offers, at least until now.



Trump puts his name to staying way out in front

Forcing herself to the front of the crowd around Donald Trump and yelling to make herself heard above the cheers of his supporters, the young woman leant across the bar of the Treehouse pub in Bettendorf, Iowa, (Hugh Tomlinson writes).

"We're so honoured to have you here. We love you, we love you," the woman, who works at the pub, shouted at the former president. "We're die-hard. Trump 2024!"

Then, leaning in, she offered her low-cut vest top for the former president to sign. Trump, 77, obliged.

Trump posed for selfies and shouted "Who needs pizza?", handing out boxes of food over the heads of his stony-faced secret service agents.

His visit followed two campaign speeches in Iowa, which will be the first state to vote in the Republican primary race, in mid-January.

Trump will travel to the other early-to-vote states in the coming days as the latest polls confirm his grip on the Republican race for the White House.

He led the field on 39 per cent in a survey in New Hampshire on Wednesday, 26 points clear of Vivek Ramaswamy, the 38-year-old biotech millionaire who has vaulted other challengers in recent weeks. The poll, by CNN and the University of New Hampshire, made dismal reading for Ron DeSantis, the Florida governor, who was once seen as Trump's most formidable rival. He fell to 10 per cent, down 13 points since July.

CHARLIE NEIBERGALL/AP



Donald Trump, the Republican leader in the polls, handed out pizza and autographs in a bar full of supporters in Iowa

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*Based on two sharing, please call for alternative options and dates. Subject to availability, itinerary details are subject to change. Operated by and subject to the booking conditions of The Aurora Zone, a company independent of News UK. The Aurora Zone, Maling Exchange, Hoults Yard, Walker Road, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE6 1AB; ATOL 6865, ABTA Y6261., a company wholly separate from News UK. Image Credit Ole C Salomonsen.

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Police raid uncovers disco and zoo in gang-run jail

Venezuela
Stephen Gibbs Caracas

A Venezuelan prison run by its inmates like a small town, complete with a zoo, a disco and a swimming pool, has been cleared out by government authorities in an operation involving 11,000 security personnel.

The Tocorón prison, about two hours outside the capital, Caracas, has for years been what local aid organisations euphemistically called "self-run" — meaning that gangs, rather than the prison guards, were in charge.

President Maduro's government has given few details of the pre-dawn raid, but it is understood there was little resistance from those inside the prison.

Venezuelan independent media sources reported that senior gang leaders had escaped the area well before the security forces arrived, suggesting that some sort of deal with the authorities may have been organised in advance.

Maduro nevertheless praised the operation as a "great success in the fight against criminal organisations".



Wives, girlfriends and the children of prisoners were living in the complex

Images from the jail showed the inmates had creature comforts to ease the inconvenience of imprisonment, including rows of homes for their families, a bank, a casino, a baseball pitch and a zoo with several pink flamingos and an ostrich.

Drone images of the security operation showed a large crowd of women and children, presumably relatives of inmates, also being expelled from the prison.

"I am waiting to hear where they are taking my husband. I was living in there, but they kicked us out," one woman complained.

State media also released photographs appearing to show prisoners sitting on the floor of an outdoor area of the prison under armed guard.

The Tocorón prison was seen as the headquarters of the Tren de Aragua, Venezuela's most powerful gang. Its leader, Héctor Guerrero Flores, known as Warrior Boy, was serving a 17-year sentence in the jail for murder and drug trafficking. There has been no information on his whereabouts since the raid. The gang has been linked to kidnappings, robberies, drug trafficking, prostitution, extortion and illegal gold mining.

It is not clear what provoked the clampdown, after years in which Maduro's government has openly allowed a laissez-faire approach to prison administration — evidenced by the need for thousands of troops to approach the Tocorón complex.

One theory is that Maduro, seen as a dictator by several western governments, including the UK and the US, is trying to clean up his image before presidential elections next year.

Academic 'Swiftposium' studies pop legacy

Australia
Bernard Lagan Sydney

The University of Melbourne will host the first international academic symposium on the impact of Taylor Swift on the music industry, culture and the global economy.

The three-day "Swiftposium", to be held in February, will coincide with the American singer-songwriter's tour of the country.

Swift has been the subject of university courses in the United States, but this is the first global symposium and it has been organised by scholars from Australia and New Zealand. "Swiftposium is a hybrid academic conference for scholars to engage in critical dialogue about Swift's popularity and its profound implications for a range of issues including gender, fandom, popular culture, literature, the economy and the music industry," according to the University of Melbourne.

Academics are encouraged to debate a number of topics: "Critical engagement with the Taylor Swift phenomenon is encouraged and diverse voices and opinions are welcome."

Jennifer Beckett, a lecturer in media and communications, said the idea for the symposium began with a half-serious tweet that grew into something more serious.

"Taylor Swift really does have a very concrete impact globally, across things that affect all of us," Beckett said. "World leaders are begging for her to bring the *Eras* tour to their country because of the economic benefits that it brings." Ticket sales for the tour could exceed $1 billion.

Speakers for Swiftposium will be chosen in the coming months, but "if Taylor Swift wants to come, I think all of us would have to spend some time picking our jaws up from the ground, but that invitation is definitely there," Beckett said.

Business

WORLD MARKETS (Change on the day)

FTSE 100 7,678.62 (-53.03)▼

Dow Jones 34,070.42 (-370.46)▼

COMMODITIES

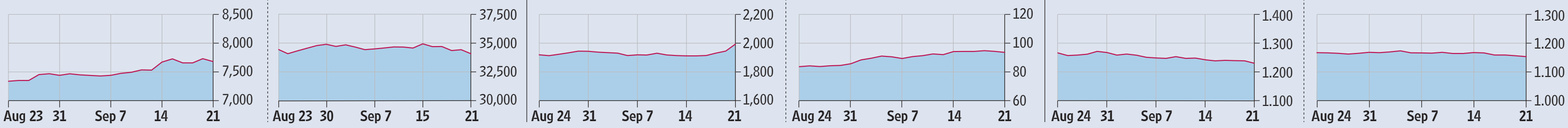
Gold $1,918.15 (+27.30)▲

Brent crude (6pm) $93.68 (-0.68)▼

CURRENCIES

£/$ $1.2298 (-0.0090)▼

£/€ €1.1532 (-0.0028)▼



Cisco dives into cybersecurity by splurging $28bn on Splunk

Katie Prescott
Technology Business Editor

Cisco Systems has agreed to buy Splunk, a US-listed cybersecurity company, for about $28 billion to beef up its software businesses and capitalise on increasing use of artificial intelligence.

In its largest transaction yet, Cisco agreed to pay $157 per share in cash, a premium of 31 per cent to Splunk's closing share price on Wednesday.

Investors marked shares in Splunk sharply higher with the stock closing up 20.8 per cent, or $24.84, at $144.43, while Cisco was down 3.9 per cent, or $2.16, at $53.34 in New York last night.

The merger will allow Cisco to increase its recurring revenue and strengthen its foothold in cybersecurity and in the rapidly developing world of artificial intelligence, the company said. There is a break-up fee of more than a billion dollars for both sides if the deal does not go ahead by March 2025, according to the Securities and Exchange Commission filing.

Dan Ives at Wedbush Securities said the Cisco deal "speaks to a massive wave of mergers and acquisitions that we see on the horizon over the next six to nine months in the broader tech and software space as more strategic and financial M&A starts to take hold".

Cisco, which was founded in California in 1984 and went public in 1990, is best known for its networking hardware and software but also sells security, communications and cloud services. The company reported revenues of $57 billion for the year to August, an increase of 11 per cent, and has 83,000 employees.

It has made a number of acquisitions in recent months including Working Group Two, a Norwegian mobile business, and SamKnows, a UK internet performance monitoring company.

Splunk, started in 2003, derives its unusual name from the word "spelunker", which means someone whose hobby is studying caves. The business claims it helps organisations "explore the vast depths of their data", with customers including Hyatt and Coca-Cola.

It reported revenues of $910 million in the first half of the year, up from $800 million. It has 7,500 employees, who are known as "splunkers".

Sterling hit by interest rate decision

Pound sinks to six-month low against the dollar

Mehreen Khan, Jack Barnett

The pound dipped to its lowest level in six months and bonds rallied after the Bank of England held borrowing costs steady for the first time since November 2021 in a finely balanced decision.

Investors sold sterling after the announcement, pushing the pound 0.5 per cent lower against the dollar to $1.22, its weakest level since March.

The Bank's monetary policy committee decided to keep the base rate unchanged at 5.25 per cent in a 5-4 vote split, reflecting a division among the nine ratesetters about whether borrowing costs are restrictive enough to ensure inflation falls to the official target level of 2 per cent.

Andrew Bailey, the Bank's governor, cast the decisive vote to keep rates on hold after 14 consecutive increases.

The decision came after headline inflation fell to 6.7 per cent in August, having peaked at more than 11 per cent last autumn. The Bank has also been encouraged by notable drops in measures of services and goods inflation, which declined more than expected in August. The pound is sensitive to changes in interest rate policy, with higher borrowing costs meaning better returns for investors who hold sterling, while dovish monetary policy pushes down a currency's value relative to the dollar. The pound hit a high of $1.31 in July after inflation figures remained stubbornly high.

Bond yields, which move inversely to prices, rallied on the decision, with two-year gilts dropping to a three-month low of 4.6 per cent, shedding 0.6 percentage points. Benchmark 10-year gilts yields, which are a proxy for the government's borrowing costs, also shed 0.85 percentage points to 4.29 per cent, their weakest since July.

In guidance to the financial markets, the Bank maintained that it was ready to raise interest rates again on signs of "persistent inflationary pressures and resilience in the economy as a whole". But ratesetters also acknowledged that the rapid pace of interest rate rises was being felt in the jobs market and that monetary policy was in "restrictive territory".

This week the US Federal Reserve also decided to hold rates in the range of 5.25 to 5.5 per cent. Investors had rapidly increased their bets on UK rates being held steady after the latest inflation numbers. However, yesterday's market reaction suggested that the Bank's decision was still a "bit of a surprise", Tim Graf, managing director for macro strategy at State Street, said.

The FTSE 100 broke a two-day winning streak to close down 53.03 points, or 0.7 per cent, at 7,678.62.

The Bank will make its next decision on November 2, when it will also produce new forecasts on inflation and growth and have more data on the impact of rate rises on wage growth.

Thomas Pugh, economist at the professional services firm RSM, suggested that interest rates had reached a peak. "Inflation is likely to remain sticky over the next year, meaning rates will remain around their current levels for around a year and then be only likely to come down gradually," he said.

Split decision, pages 38-39

ARNOLD JEROCKI/GC/GETTY IMAGES



Fashion statement Emma Watson, brand ambassador for Prada, was on-message for the fashion house's Milan show in a dress by the label with matching bag

Warner Bros doubles down on UK studio

Tom Howard

Watford is to become the unlikely new home for Batman and Superman after Warner Bros confirmed that it is to go ahead with a huge expansion of its Leavesden film studios.

The addition of ten new sound stages and 400,000 sq ft of production and support space will increase the filming capacity of the studios, where the Harry Potter films were shot, by 50 per cent.

Warners expects its investment to create 4,000 jobs directly and indirectly and contribute an extra £200 million each year to the UK economy. Building work is due to begin next spring and complete in 2027, after which Leavesden will become the main production hub for DC Studios, the Warners arm responsible for making the Superman, Batman and Wonder Woman films.

Jeremy Hunt, the chancellor, said: "Warner Bros Discovery's ambitious plan to grow its Leavesden studio … means that British-made entertainment will continue to delight and entertain global audiences." Hunt was in Los Angeles yesterday, meeting David Zaslav, chief executive of Warner Bros.

The expansion, planning permission for which was granted by Three Rivers district council and Watford borough council earlier this year, will cap the dramatic transformation of a site that in the mid-1990s was a disused airfield. The aircraft hangars and factories were first turned into filming space for the Bond film *GoldenEye*. Since then, a host of shows and movies have been filmed at Leavesden, including *House of the Dragon*, the *Game of Thrones* spin-off series, and, most recently, *Barbie*.

The UK has established itself as a filming hub for big production houses by offering generous tax breaks. Disney is reported to have earned upwards of £300 million in rebates for filming its Star Wars sequels in Britain.

Property investors more used to financing offices, flats and warehouses have been looking to add film studios to their portfolios to take advantage of the production boom.

Need to know

1 Rupert Murdoch is stepping down as the chairman of News Corp, which owns The Times, to be succeeded by his elder son, Lachlan. Murdoch, 92, will also step down as head of Fox Corporation, owner of Fox News, also now to be run by his son, 52. He moves into a new role as chairman emeritus of both News Corp and Fox. Pages 1, 4-5

2 The pound fell to its lowest level in six months and bonds rallied after the Bank of England held borrowing costs steady for the first time since November 2021 in a finely balanced decision. Investors sold sterling after the announcement, pushing the pound 0.5 per cent lower to $1.22, its weakest level since March. Pages 37, 38-39

3 Watford is to become the unlikely new home for Batman and Superman after Warner Bros confirmed that it is to go ahead with a huge expansion of its Leavesden film studios in Hertfordshire. Page 37

4 Cisco Systems has agreed to buy Splunk, a US-listed cybersecurity company, for about $28 billion to beef up its software businesses and capitalise on increasing use of artificial intelligence. In its largest ever transaction, Cisco agreed to pay $157 per share in cash, a premium of 31 per cent to Splunk's closing share price on Wednesday. Page 37

5 Toshiba, the embattled industrial conglomerate, will be taken into private hands in an £11 billion deal, bringing to an end its 74 years on the Japanese stock market. A private equity consortium led by Japan Industrial Partners has succeeded in a tender offer announced last month, taking on 78.65 per cent of Toshiba shares. Page 40

6 Dame Carolyn McCall, the boss of ITV, has warned that a lack of government initiatives to revive the economy is having a direct impact on advertising revenue as businesses cut their marketing spend. Page 41

7 New trainers still lure Generation Z shoppers even if purse strings tighten elsewhere, Régis Schultz, the chief executive of JD Sports Fashion, said. Pages 42-43

8 An improved labour market has helped bolster sales at Next, which raised its annual profit forecast for the third time in four months. The retailer, which trades from about 500 shops in the UK, is considered a bellwether for the high street. Page 43

9 Richard Fairman, the chief executive of CVS Group, one of the UK's biggest veterinary companies, has rejected concerns about profiteering after the competition regulator launched a review of the market. Page 44

10 Sally Grimes, formerly chief executive of Clif Bar & Company, a US organic energy-bar maker, has been appointed chief executive of Diageo less than four months after the sudden death of Sir Ivan Menezes, the group's chief executive for the previous decade. Page 44

Pause or peak? Bank's split

Ratesetters' 5-4 vote leaves investors and businesses unclear on the direction of travel, writes **Mehreen Khan**

The Bank of England's knife-edge decision to keep interest rates steady after 14 consecutive increases has raised speculation that the era of aggressive monetary tightening is drawing to a close.

Yet although tightening was paused this month, the messaging from the monetary policy committee's September meeting was nuanced. For a start, the narrow 5-4 vote split in favour of no change suggests that even a small shift towards hawkishness on the nine-strong committee could change the balance at the November meeting.

The MPC also retained its longstanding guidance to financial markets that it stands ready to raise interest rates again if inflation proves more "persistent" than expected. The effect is something of a "hawkish hold", mimicking the language adopted by the US Federal Reserve, which held interest rates this week but did not declare victory over inflation.

How they voted

HOLD	RAISE
Andrew Bailey	Sir Jon Cunliffe
Ben Broadbent	Megan Greene
Swati Dhingra	Jonathan Haskel
Huw Pill	Catherine Mann
Dave Ramsden	

One of the biggest differences between the Bank and other central banks in the US and the eurozone is the publication of the voting pattern of ratesetters. A small majority of five, including Andrew Bailey, the governor, thought inflation was falling fast enough to warrant the first pause in rates since November 2021. Deputy governors Dave Ramsden and Ben Broadbent, chief economist Huw Pill and an external member, Swati Dhingra, also voted to keep rates steady.

The four dissenting ratesetters were Sir Jon Cunliffe, the outgoing deputy governor, and the external members Megan Greene, Jonathan Haskel and Catherine Mann. They voted in favour of increasing the base rate to 5.5 per cent, which would have been the highest since December 2007.

The split among ratesetters gives the lie to claims that the MPC is beset by "groupthink" as the opposing camps placed an emphasis on different sets of economic data. The no-change contingent took comfort in the sharp decline in services sector inflation, a key measure of domestic price pressures that is monitored by the Bank. Headline consumer price inflation also fell to 6.7 per cent last month, undershooting the Bank's 6.9 per cent forecast for the first time in three months.

The hawks, on the other hand, warned that one-off factors had helped to push down headline and core inflation in August and worried that wage growth, which is accelerating at the fastest pace in 22 years, will not slow in line with the labour market this year.

"The latest developments meant that the judgment to keep the Bank rate unchanged at this meeting, rather than increase it, was finely balanced," the MPC said.

The question facing investors is whether the pause will be the start of a period of prolonged monetary policy stasis. Money markets are placing a 70 per cent probability on no change in November.

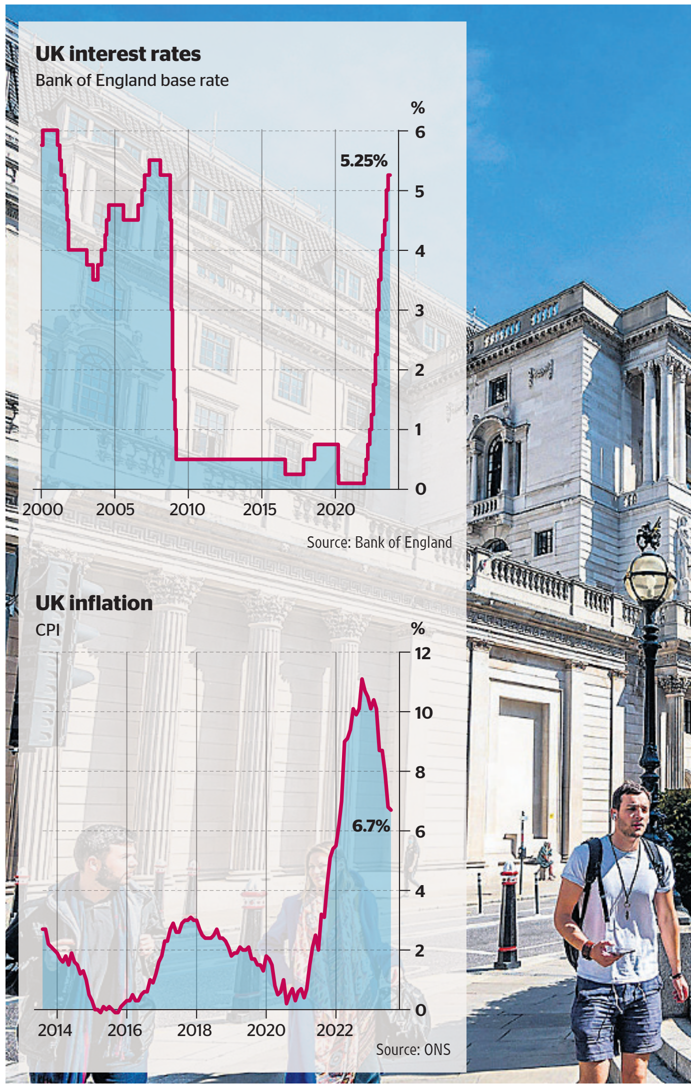
Melanie Baker, senior economist at Royal London Asset Management, thinks the MPC will be forced to tighten again this year when the Bank "will have more data to process, including a further set of GDP revisions, and have a chance to fully review their forecasts".

Analysts at Bank of America are not ruling out the prospect of rate rises in December or February, if the economy and labour market prove more resilient than expected. The Bank's new forecasts in November could also revise up inflation projections for the next three years.

Investors are still pencilling in a peak in interest rates of 5.5 per cent, but the MPC's statement did not provide any guidance to that effect. The ratesetting committee will also have a new member — the incoming deputy governor Sarah Breeden, making her first monetary policy decision in November — with no guarantee that she will share the hawkish view of her predecessor.

Bruna Skarica, economist at Morgan Stanley, said Breeden was likely to vote with the core contingent of Bank ratesetters like Bailey and Pill, shifting the balance in favour of the doves by 6-3.

Katharine Neiss, a former Bank official and chief Europe economist at PGIM Fixed Income, thinks the MPC has now made the "most dovish statement and decision we have seen coming out of a major central bank recently". It followed the US Federal Reserve's indication that it will carry out one more rate increase this year and similar hints from hawks at the European Central Bank last week.



Neiss added: "All of this suggests inflation will remain high in the UK for quite some time. If inflation developments or further inflation shocks hit — including through a weaker pound, given the consumer price index is very sensitive to movements in the exchange rate — then the Bank may need to resume chasing inflation through higher rates."

Despite the pause this month, the signals from the MPC suggest that investors should not expect any significant monetary easing next year. The Fed did the same this week, by holding rates and slashing its forecasts for future rate cuts from four to two in 2024.

By keeping rates restrictive for longer, future decisions for no change in monetary policy will maintain the MPC's hawkish stance as it seeks to rebuild its credibility for inflation-fighting. The stance will become

Tax windfall helps push borrowing below forecast

Mehreen Khan Economics Editor

The government's borrowing bill was lower than expected last month as falling inflation and bumper tax revenues helped improve public finances.

Figures from the Office for National Statistics showed that monthly public sector borrowing in August was £11.6 billion, below the £13 billion forecast by the government's fiscal watchdog and just above the £11.1 billion expected by polled economists.

The figures are the latest undershoot in borrowing for the government. It has benefited from a rising tax take and falling inflation, which has reduced the Treasury's bill for servicing debt.

Total borrowing is now £69.6 billion for the financial year that started in April, £11.4 billion lower than the Office for Budget Responsibility forecast in March.

The statistics office said the government was collecting more VAT and income tax, helping increase monthly tax receipts to £57.6 billion, up nearly £3 billion on August last year. High inflation has boosted public finances by dragging workers into higher tax brackets.

Recent falls in monthly inflation, as measured by the retail prices index, have helped cut the government's debt interest bill on inflation-linked gilts by £3.1 billion, compared with August last year. Total debt servicing costs last month were £5.6 billion, undershooting the £7.9 billion projected by the OBR.

The figures are a boost for Jeremy Hunt, the chancellor, before his autumn statement in November. Treasury officials hope that an improvement in public finances will give the government room to announce a tax cut in the spring budget, before the general election next year.

The chancellor said: "These numbers show why, after helping families in the pandemic, we now need to balance the books. That becomes much easier when inflation is under control."

The statistics office said the debt ratio, which measures government debt as a proportion of the economy, rose slightly to 98.8 per cent and is at its highest level since the 1960s.

Martin Beck, chief economic adviser to the EY Item Club forecaster, said that despite having extra billions in fiscal headroom, the chancellor was unlikely to spend his windfalls this autumn. "The fiscal rules around government borrowing and debt relate to a period five years out, so short-term developments in the fiscal numbers aren't of much relevance," Beck said.

Cara Pacitti, senior economist at the Resolution Foundation, said that despite the boost to tax revenues, high inflation also meant public spending was being squeezed in real terms, as the government's departmental budgets were set before the inflationary surge.

"The chancellor may choose to bank the good borrowing news from higher inflation and ignore the public services pain it is causing in his upcoming autumn statement, but that challenge will need to be confronted by whoever wins the next election," Pacitti said.

decision sows doubt



increasingly difficult to maintain if the economy enters a recession next year and with political pressures on the Bank to lower borrowing costs and stimulate the economy before the general election late next year.

George Buckley, UK economist at Nomura, thinks the MPC will carry out four rate cuts in the second half of next year, reducing the base rate to around 4.25 per cent by December.

The last time the MPC was this divided on a rates decision was in February 2022, when members differed over whether to increase borrowing costs after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Yesterday's vote split is of more significance and represents the narrow judgment calls that will make communicating monetary policy far harder as the interest rate peak comes into view.

"This decision casts more uncertainties around whether this is a peak or will ultimately prove a pause," Modupe Adegbembo, economist at AXA Investment Managers, said.

Treasury may face £3bn bill over bonds

Jack Barnett Economics Correspondent

The Treasury may have to transfer an extra £3 billion to the Bank of England to cover losses on bond sales that were announced yesterday, analysts said.

Members of the monetary policy committee (MPC) voted to step up the speed of bond sales, known as quantitative tightening, from £80 billion a year to £100 billion over the next 12 months after an assessment concluded that traders could absorb the increase.

"The committee judged that quantitative tightening was going smoothly," the MPC said.

While the sales will reduce the near £760 billion of gilts, or government bonds, on the Bank's balance sheet, they will also crystallise losses on assets bought after the 2008 financial crisis and during the Covid-19 pandemic. As of last month, the market value of gilts held by the Bank was about 14 per cent lower than their purchase price.

"If we apply that to the extra £20 billion of sales, the government will have to compensate the Bank by around £3 billion," Martin Beck, the EY Item Club's chief economic adviser, said.

The Treasury covers losses on the Bank's bond buying under an indemnity agreement. Global bond prices have fallen after central banks raised interest rates to fight inflation. The Bank's losses have been magnified by it earning less on the bonds it holds compared with what it pays lenders who store cash with the central bank.

The £100 billion gilt portfolio reduction includes sales and maturities, meaning not all of the balance sheet reduction will be exposed to losses.

After the crisis, the Bank bought hundreds of billions of pounds of debt to stimulate the economy by keeping interest rates low under a process known as quantitative easing. It stepped up purchases in the pandemic.

However, a resurgence in inflation prompted the Bank to end bond purchases for fear of stoking price rises.

By 2033, the Treasury is expected to have sent £150 billion to the Bank to cover losses on bonds.

The Bank's latest QE report said: "Between 2009 and 2022, [QE] generated positive net cashflows … to [the Treasury], peaking at a cumulative £123.8 billion at end-September 2022."

Confidence rises to 20-month high

Jack Barnett Economics Correspondent

Improving optimism about the economy has raised consumer confidence to its highest since January last year.

A survey by GfK, a market research company that has tracked sentiment in the UK since the 1970s, showed that its consumer confidence index rose four points this month to a net minus 21. It is the latest data to suggest that the economy is beginning to recover.

The Office for National Statistics said this week that inflation fell last month from 6.8 per cent to 6.7 per cent, confounding forecasts of a rise to 7 per cent. The surprise fall in inflation helped convince the Bank of England to hold interest rates at 5.25 per cent, the first pause in monetary policy tightening since November 2021, after 14 straight rate rises.

GfK's survey of 2,001 individuals was carried out before the rate decision or the statistics office published its inflation estimates, suggesting that the index's next instalment will also improve.

The statistics office said this month, in a retrospective GDP upgrade, that the economy had rebounded to its pre-pandemic size by the end of 2021. It had been thought that GDP was about 0.2 per cent smaller compared with pre-Covid levels, but after the upgrade it is about 1.5 per cent bigger.

Joe Staton, client strategy director at GfK, said: "The view on our personal financial situation for the past year and the next is registering marginal but welcome growth, while expectations for the UK's wider economy in the coming year show a more robust six-point increase."

Confidence in future personal finances over the next year rose one point to minus 2. The major purchase index, a barometer for demand for items such as cars and homes, climbed four points to minus 20.

The recovery in consumer confidence comes on the eve of the anniversary of Liz Truss's mini-budget. Her £45 billion of unfunded tax cuts sent the pound to a record low against the dollar, pushed UK government bond yields up and sent mortgage rates higher. The financial market fallout pushed GfK's consumer confidence index to a record low of minus 49 in September last year.

Reverse gear feels wearily familiar



BUSINESS COMMENTARY *Alistair Osborne*

Backtrack Britain has a productivity crisis. Maybe the two things are linked. How much time, energy and money do businesses waste gearing up for ludicrous political policies?

Rishi Sunak's reverse ferret over all the "green crap", as one of his predecessors put it, isn't necessarily wrong in itself — even if, with an election coming up, it is nakedly political. It was Boris Johnson, at his boosterish best, who brought forward the ban on the sale of new diesel and petrol cars by ten years to a fantasyland 2030. And while Ford and Volkswagen may whinge about Sunak pushing the deadline back out to 2035, Close Brothers Motor Finance hit a more pragmatic note. It said the delay to the ban would not "come as a surprise to car dealers", as 85 per cent of them "didn't think it would go ahead as planned anyway".

A key reason? Because the deadline was unachievable. Britain has neither the battery plants nor charging infrastructure for such an abrupt switch. And, whatever the squeals from some carmakers, they're yet to produce an electric vehicle that, for most people, is remotely affordable. Relaxing the phasing out of new gas boilers when it can cost £10,000 to fit a heat pump has a similar logic.

Yet the whole thing is symptomatic of the way Britain works, with its first past the post politics encouraging more flip-flops than on a beach — lately in the same party, too, thanks to the conveyor belt of Tory PMs. Here, you have sympathy with Ford when it says that the three things it needs from government are "ambition, commitment and consistency".

This one has routinely failed on all three, with the £100 billion blank cheque on wheels, HS2, the prize example. Let loose without any robust cost-benefit analysis, not least for a post-pandemic working-from-home world, rarely a week goes by without talk that ministers are about to lop another bit off the project to save costs. The eastern leg to Leeds has already been axed, while there's gossip the one west to Manchester and the link to Euston station face a similar fate. The result could yet be just a zippy line from west London's Old Oak Common to Birmingham: a sort of anti-levelling-up express designed to suck more people and jobs into the capital.

Who knows what will happen? Which is the point. Think of all the time and money potentially wasted by planners, engineers, consultants, environment experts, procurement staff and contractors because the government started a half-baked project and then ripped bits of it up.

Britain's nuclear plans have been similarly shambolic. In 2011, the Cameron coalition government outlined eight sites for a new nuclear nirvana, since when the sole scheme under construction is the years-late Hinkley Point C, where costs have mushroomed from £18 billion to £33 billion. As for small modular reactors, Tufan Erginbilgic, the Rolls-Royce boss, said last month that the group was stuck in a "holding pattern" until ministers made up their minds whether to go ahead. Is it a surprise Britain has a productivity problem? Or that investors go elsewhere? Yes, the UK isn't China. Democracies have a more iterative approach to policy decisions. But a government capable of making good ones and sticking to them would be a big help.

Next on platform

Today's puzzler from Lord Wolfson of Aspley Guise. Is Next in danger of turning into "an unwieldy retail conglomerate"?

At first blush, no chance. The half-year results, coming with typical forensics, ooze focus — not to mention a third upgrade to full-year profit guidance in four months (report, page 43). Having underrated the hardiness of the UK consumer, his lordship is now shooting for £875 million pre-tax, up £30 million on his previous effort and 0.5 per cent ahead of last year.

Yet while his latest forecasting blooper lifted the shares 3 per cent to £73.50, it was his thoughts on the fledgling Total Platform that caught the eye. It allows other brands to use Next's IT and distribution clout for their own ecommerce and is expected to deliver £28 million net profit this year and a return on capital of 25 per cent — "strong", as he said, "for a business that did not exist three years ago".

Swiftly, Wolfson worked out that it made sense for Next to take stakes in companies using the platform, since when it's morphed into an acquisition tool. Next now has controlling stakes in Reiss, Made, Joules and the UK arms of Victoria's Secret and Gap, as well as 44 per cent of JoJo Maman Bébé.

The key is buying into "a great brand" with "strong management" at the right price — something he admits he got wrong with Joules. But then comes another challenge: fighting the "assumption" that they should start doing things the Next way, when he's adamant they must keep distinctive identities. As he puts it, despite the benefits of shared infrastructure and economies of scale, not least in an online world, "more often than not retail conglomerates fail" — as Sears, Storehouse and Arcadia proved. Get it right and the platform could bring Next plenty of growth. But as you'd expect with Wolfson, he's keenly scrutinising the risks.

What a result

Five-four at the Bank of England. A few more games like this and the monetary policy committee will be able to sell the broadcasting rights, complete with post-match analysis from Gary Neville. At least that way we'd know who got the winner. Was it Andrew Bailey with a diving header?

Having been so far off the ball it needed 14 successive rates rises, the MPC's too knackered to run past 5.25 per cent. Yet it seems a bit early to be calling peak rates. The Bank's analysis can be worse than VAR.

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£11bn private equity deal ends Toshiba's 74-year run on the Tokyo stock market

KAZUHIRO NOGI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES





Toshiba is perhaps best known in Britain for its electrical goods but its business also includes nuclear power plants, left

Max Kendix

Toshiba, the embattled industrial conglomerate, will be taken into private hands in a 2 trillion yen (£11 billion) deal, bringing to an end its 74 years on the Japanese stock market.

A private equity consortium led by Japan Industrial Partners (JIP) has succeeded in a tender offer announced last month, taking on 78.65 per cent of Toshiba shares at 4,620 yen each, comfortably clearing the two thirds threshold for the offer to be successful.

The move, which would mark the largest takeover deal in Japan this year once cleared by shareholders in November, will probably see Toshiba delist from the Tokyo Stock Exchange in December following a transfer to a newly created parent company, TBJH.

The deal draws a line under years of upheaval at the electronics and nuclear group. Toshiba, once the harbinger of Japanese technological innovation, has spent years dealing with a series of accounting scandals and heavy losses, having been handed Japan's largest penalty for falsifying financial statements in 2015.

Toshiba shares were demoted to the second tier of the Tokyo Stock Exchange in 2017, only returning to the first tier in January 2021. That year the chairman of Toshiba, Osamu Nagayama, was forced out by shareholders after it was revealed that the company colluded with Japan's trade ministry to weaken the influence of foreign investors at its annual shareholder meeting.

"We are deeply grateful to many of our shareholders for being understanding of the company's position in this matter," Taro Shimada, chief executive of Toshiba, said in a statement. "The company will implement a series of procedures for the privatisation of the company's shares going forward. Toshiba Group will now take a major step toward a new future with a new shareholder."

Much of the conglomerate's core business, including nuclear power plants, hard drives and information technology systems, operates via separate, independent subsidiaries. Toshiba is looking at reintegrating the subsidiaries to streamline operations over the next two to three years, according to Nikkei Asia, the financial news website. Overseas activist investors have taken up about a quarter of shares in the company and had expressed some initial opposition to the initial JIP offer.

Travis Lundy, an analyst, said the deal's success should defuse harmful internal tensions. "Activist shareholders and Toshiba were stuck with each other for years. This takeover allows both sides to escape their mutual bearhug," he added.

Questions remain over the fate of Goro Yanase, the former chief operating officer who was ousted in February after auditors found he misappropriated company funds by not naming attendees on entertainment expenses. Yanase is said to have been instrumental in the take-private deal and Toshiba's lenders are pushing for his reinstatement, sources told The Wall Street Journal yesterday.

Toshiba announced it had accepted the offer from the JIP-led consortium, which includes 20 Japanese businesses, in March, after shareholders rejected plans posed in 2021 to split Toshiba into three separate companies. Several other takeover offers were rejected, including one from CVC Capital Partners, the British private equity group. Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation is among the banks financing the buyout through 1.2 trillion yen in loans.

Founded in Tokyo in 1875 as a manufacturer of telegraph equipment, Toshiba has in recent years offloaded much of what once made it a household name. When on the brink of bankruptcy in 2015, it sold its memory-chip business, and its personal computing arm was sold to Sharp, the Japanese consumer electronics group, in 2020.

Writers sue OpenAI for 'systematic theft'

Times Business Reporter

Authors including John Grisham and George RR Martin are suing OpenAI for "systematic theft" in the latest legal action by writers arguing that artificial intelligence programs are trained on their work without permission.

In papers filed in federal court in New York, 17 authors alleged "flagrant and harmful infringements" of copyright and said the company's ChatGPT program relied on "systematic theft on a mass scale".

The lawsuit was organised by the Authors Guild, America's oldest and largest professional organisation for writers. Others involved include Jodi Picoult and Jonathan Franzen.

"It is imperative that we stop this theft in its tracks or we will destroy our incredible literary culture, which feeds many other creative industries in the US," Mary Rasenberger, the guild's chief executive, said. "Great books are generally written by those who spend their careers and, indeed, their lives, learning and perfecting their crafts. To preserve our literature, authors must have the ability to control if and how their works are used by generative AI."

The suit cites specific ChatGPT searches for each author, such as one for Martin that alleges the program generated an "infringing, unauthorised, and detailed outline" for a prequel to *A Game of Thrones*.

OpenAI said the company respects the rights of writers and believes they should benefit from AI technology. It said: "We're having productive conversations with many creators around the world, including the Authors Guild, and have been working co-operatively to understand and discuss their concerns about AI. We're optimistic we will continue to find mutually beneficial ways to work together to help people utilise new technology."

Another group of authors, including Michael Chabon and David Henry Hwang, sued OpenAI in San Francisco this month for alleged "infringement of intellectual property".

Last month OpenAI asked a federal judge in California to dismiss two similar lawsuits, one involving Sarah Silverman, the comedian, and another from Paul Tremblay, the author.

In a court filing, OpenAI said the claims "misconceive the scope of copyright, failing to take into account the limitations and exceptions (including fair use) that properly leave room for innovations like the large language models now at the forefront of artificial intelligence".

Author objections to AI have helped lead Amazon to change its policies on ebooks. The online retailer now asks writers who want to publish through its Kindle Direct platform to notify Amazon in advance if they are including AI-generated material.

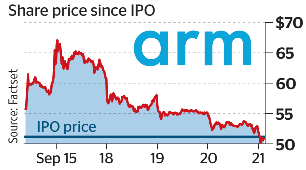
Amazon is also limiting authors to three new self-published books a day on Kindle Direct in an effort to restrict the proliferation of AI texts.

Arm's fallback raises fears over new listing prospects

Robert Miller

Arm wrestle

Share price since IPO



The euphoria surrounding the New York debut of Arm Holdings, the UK chip designer, has proved to be short-lived, raising fears about the strength of investor interest in new listings.

Last night shares in Arm, which floated at $51 last week and closed up nearly 25 per cent on the first day at $63.59, were trading at $51.05, down 3.6 per cent, or $1.83 on the day.

On Tuesday, Instacart, the online grocery start-up, began trading at $30 on the Nasdaq exchange, with the shares rising 43 per cent at one point in the session before easing back to close 12.3 per cent higher on the day at $33.70. On Wall Street yesterday the stock closed up nearly 2 per cent, or 55 cents, on the day at $30.65.

"Investment bankers that help to take companies public are pushing the strong debut of Arm and Instacart … saying this is a great time to go public," Robert Pavlik, senior portfolio manager at Dakota Wealth, the US investment manager, said. He added: "The Street is telling them, hey, this is not the greatest environment."

Others that have been gearing up for US listings include Birkenstock, the German footwear maker, and VNG, the Vietnamese internet firm.

Harry Wallop

Is everybody happy? I was until I read about the Happiness Index



This week, I am informed, is Negroni Week. It is also Organ Donation Week and, if you are reading this after your second gin, martini and campari cocktail (making your liver ineligible for donation), today is World Car Free Day, which at least means the roads will be safe for sozzled pedestrians. Phew.

These calendar events are, of course, fabricated by companies and charities as desperate marketing ploys. Take next week's International Happiness at Work Week, started by the Dutch consultancy Happy Office. But at least this event has captured our desire for more contented workplaces, or certainly less fraught ones.

It has become axiomatic that a happy workforce is a more productive one and also that Britain's meagre productivity must somehow be related to its workers' unhappiness.

According to the Health and Safety Executive the number of workers suffering a work-related illness is 1.8 million, with stress, depression and anxiety making up about half of the cases. A study earlier this year of 30,000 people across 16 countries by the insurance company Axa found that 21 per cent of Britons were struggling mentally.

This was the worst score of any country. Worse even than the United States, where they only get ten days of holiday a year and someone at a tech start-up thought that employing Prince Harry as chief impact officer was a good idea. In France the figure was a mere 10 per cent, in Thailand 5 per cent.

Which makes a book released this week very timely. *The Happiness Index* is written by Matt Phelan, who co-founded a consultancy of the same name that works with a number of well-known names including Unilever, RAC, the brewer Fuller's and the vast catering, cleaning and prison management company Sodexo. In all, it works with 150 companies around the world who between them employ two million people.

It sells software packages to human resources departments, measuring and tracking employee happiness and engagement, mostly through the use of online surveys.

"How much do you enjoy working with your team?"; "How much do you trust your organisation?"; "How free do you feel to be your true self at work?" These are some of the many questions posed. The Happiness Index then crunches the data and sends reports back to companies, saying where they are falling below their peers or how female staff, for instance, feel less inspired at work compared with men.



The firm is one of an increasing number of HR platforms doing similar things, such as Trakstar, Officevibe and WorkL (set up by the former boss of Waitrose, Lord Price). Companies now regularly monitor engagement, partly because they know it is a good thing to do and partly — call me a cynic — because a large number of executive bonuses are tied to the results of these workers' scores and HR departments have to justify their existence.

Phelan's book is devoid of cynicism, however, and makes the point that there is a strong business case for happier workers. He cites research from Alex Edmans, professor of finance at the London Business School. Edmans analysed the stock market returns of companies listed in the Forbes 100 best companies to work for in America, 1984 to 2009, and found that they outperformed the market by an average of 3.5 per cent per year. Over the 25-year period, investing in these companies would have produced 136 per cent more than investing in a tracker fund.

So how do you make your workers happier? Well, this is not made entirely clear in Phelan's book, which is full of bullet points, quotes and endless talk about how his data is backed up by neuroscience, but is light on solid advice for managers.

He writes about the importance of employees feeling recognised and appreciated, often cited as the No 1 reason people enjoy their jobs. He then gives an example of how you should not do it as a manager: an automated email sent out at 4pm on a Friday thanking staff for their work. "That would be a terrible idea and not very 'heartfelt'," he writes, but he does not explain a better way.

This is the central flaw with the book: it is not very well written. I will forgive him quoting from *Star Wars* on two separate occasions, I will even forgive him for misquoting Shakespeare, but his inability to explain and condense knotty studies into useful lessons for the reader is frustrating. In a chapter on the importance of "work-life harmony" he mentions, for instance, "some really interesting research, and the first of its kind focused on the work-life balance of female construction professionals in the Nigerian construction industry".

Fascinating, I thought. What was the research and what exactly did it show? All we are told, in one sentence, is that it "found that work-life policies enable employees to balance their work and family responsibilities". What? That's it?

Considering he lays out that he is going to prove the business case for happiness, based on "223,561 incredibly rich sources of information", I felt short-changed. There are lots of definitions of "role clarity" or "authenticity", but little advice on how to provide this in a workplace.

Much of the fault lies with the publishers, Wiley — so many business book publishers persuade interesting business leaders to write a book without doing anything to knock their ideas into shape. Making the graphics readable might have been a start.

It is a huge shame, because it is an important topic. Last week an American management expert suggested that the trick to win over anxious Gen Z workers, unused to critical feedback, was to call it "feedforward", a more positive framing of the exercise. But a play on words is not enough to tackle the deepening malaise in the workplace.

Phelan, and his company, may be very astute at measuring workers' happiness; it is just unfortunate that he has so few recommendations for improvement.

Harry Wallop is a consumer journalist and broadcaster. Follow him on X/Twitter @hwallop

ITV blames 'stagnant' economy as ad sales fall

Katie Prescott
Technology Business Editor

The boss of ITV has warned that a lack of government initiatives to revive the economy is having a direct impact on advertising revenue as businesses cut their marketing spend.

Dame Carolyn McCall told the Royal Television Society conference in Cambridge that it feels like people are sitting on their hands and there is a "waiting game" before the election, which means it is "proving to be quite a hard second half".

Although ITV has high-profile shows scheduled, including *Big Brother* and Rugby World Cup games, McCall said: "It is not about programmes. Advertising revenue is tied to the economy, the UK's is not doing very well. The government talks about growth all the time but it has been very, very quiet."

The chief executive said she was confident TV ad revenue would bounce back because "it always does eventually . . . but the uncertainty means it is hard to forecast when that will be".

ITV's profits before tax fell almost 80 per cent to £45 million in the first six months of the year, with advertising revenue down 11 per cent to £811 million from £910 million the year before.

The ITV chief said she could not differentiate between Labour and the Conservatives when it came to their strategies for "what is going to get us out of what is quite a stagnant and gloomy place". McCall, who became ITV's first female chief executive in 2018, said: "It is frustrating, because we are doing worse than every single European country except for Germany."

ITV put out a public statement this year to counter reports that it was "actively exploring" a bid for the TV producer All3Media, which is being put up for sale by its owners, Liberty Global and Warner Bros Discovery.

Asked about the prospect of a merger with All3, McCall said ITV was "still monitoring it but we are not actively exploring it". Calling All3 a "great business", she said it was "interesting" and that ITV wanted to expand its studios business, but added that "there will always be a lot going on in any discussion about getting together."

Mike Fries, chief executive of Liberty Global, said that "everyone" in the industry was having a look at the business. The sales process is understood to be well under way, led by bankers at JP Morgan.

Shares in ITV were up 1¾p, or 2.4 per cent, at 74¼p.

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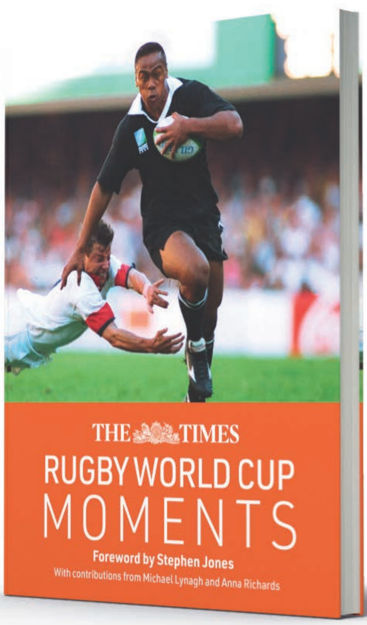
Inflation may be starting to come down but the UK economy is still struggling to grow. Despite the latest decision to hold interest rates, markets remain wary of further increases to come and are questioning whether the cost of borrowing will stay higher for longer.

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Young shoppers give JD Sports a spring in its step

New trainers still lure Generation Z shoppers even if purse strings tighten elsewhere, the boss of JD Sports Fashion said (Isabella Fish writes).
The retailer made a

Co-op profits from mutual benefits of membership

Max Kendix

The Co-op swung into operating profit in the first half of the year after making more than £100 million in cost savings in "turbulent economic headwinds".

The group reported £43 million in underlying operating profit, compared with a loss of £1 million in the same period last year.

Shirine Khoury-Haq, its chief executive, said: "While the economic environment remains challenging, we have again improved our underlying financial strength, significantly grown our membership base and delivered more for our members and their communities."

The number of new members of the mutual organisation grew by 55 per cent to 430,000 sign-ups after the introduction of lower prices for certain products for members, mirroring rival supermarket loyalty schemes that have grown in prominence during the cost of living squeeze.

The fee for Co-op membership is a flat one-off £1, which buys a share in the group. Co-op announced a campaign in April to attract a million new members in the next five years. The total number of active members now stands at 4.58 million, up from 4.35 million in the first half of last year.

The group said that 44 per cent of those who joined in the first half of the year were under the age of 36 and that it delivered a 77 per cent improvement in marketing return on investment.

Co-op has about 70,000 employees and runs the UK's fifth biggest food retailer, a funeral services provider and smaller divisions dealing in insurance and legal services.

Khoury-Haq said there had been a "fundamental and permanent shift in our strategy" towards cutting the cost of products in its food shops. Despite absorbing £117 million in inflationary costs, she said that "because we're not beholden to shareholders, we have been able to reduce our cost base and restructure our business earlier".

The funerals unit, which plans to be the first to pilot the "sustainable" option of water cremation this year, enjoyed a 7.2 per cent increase in volumes and revenue to £146 million.

Net debt fell by £600 million to the "historically low level" of £123 million, helped by the sale of petrol station forecourts to Asda.

● Criminal gangs are operating "seemingly exempt from consequences", Matt Hood, head of Co-op's food business, said. The group recorded nearly 1,000 retail crime incidents a day in the first half of the year, up 35 per cent year on year, as theft and fraud set the group back £33 million. Hood said that even when offenders were caught, 80 per cent were let go due to police inaction.

LUKE MACGREGOR/BLOOMBERG/GETTY IMAGES



JD Sports said economic conditions were helpful for its key customers

dash to the top of the blue-chip leaderboard yesterday after Régis Schultz, the chief executive, said its key customers were "benefiting from salary increases and low unemployment" and were "less affected by mortgage rates, as they live at home with mum and dad".

Sales at the FTSE 100 retailer rose 8.3 per cent to £4.78 billion in the six months to the end of July. Operating profit rose 20 per cent to £400.1 million. Profit before tax was £375.2 million, an increase of 25.8 per cent year-on-year.

JD said it was on track to post annual pre-tax profit of £1.04 billion, up 5 per cent on last year. "We are acutely aware of how tough the macroeconomic environment is," the company said.

"Despite this context, we expect the group's headline profit will be in line with the current market consensus expectations."

The update sent JD Sports's share price, which has risen about 10 per cent in the past year, up by 12p, or 9 per cent, to 145p.

Investors were particularly pleased that its sales in North America had defied pessimism in the sector after last month's profit warning from Foot Locker, an American rival. First-half revenue was up 15 per cent in the region, while sales at its European unit grew 27 per cent.

Mamta Valechha, equity research analyst at Quilter Cheviot, said: "While the standout performance came from Europe … the key focus on today's results will be North America, where the market has been quite nervous following profit warnings from Foot Locker and Dick's Sporting Goods.

"JD Sports, however, is in a different ballpark to these peers and it produced solid results."

Investec said that US sales at JD Sports had returned to growth "after a strong back-to-school season".

Schultz, 54, became chief executive last summer, having been head of retail at the Al-Futtaim Group, based in Dubai. He took over from Peter Cowgill, who ran JD Sports from 2004 until his ousting in May last year after own goals that crystallised City concern about his dual role as executive chairman.

The new boss said that he was optimistic about the run-up to Christmas. "Employment is very high and young adults have jobs, so I think we feel good," he said.

"Last year was a very good [festive] period. We don't see anything showing it would be different this year."

The group remains committed to expanding the JD Sports brand globally and plans to open more than 200 shops this financial year.

The business has more than 3,400 stores in 38 countries, with a workforce of about 75,000. Its brands include Footpatrol, Blacks and Sizeer, together with a chain of more than 70 JD Gyms.

While conscious of challenges in the macroeconomic backdrop, Shore Capital reiterated its buy stance on JD Sports "due to its strong structural position".

It added: "The company's robust balance sheet allows it to outinvest its peers, particularly in the US market."

Sofa seller's reassurance softens blow

Isabella Fish

Britain's biggest sofa seller has reported a 50 per cent fall in annual profit as it battles against rising costs and a slowdown in consumer spending on big-ticket items.

Doncaster-based DFS Furniture said pre-tax profit had fallen to £29.7 million in the year to June 25, from £58.5 million the previous 12 months. Revenue from continuing operations dropped by 5.3 per cent to £1.09 billion as the "weak economic backdrop" dampened customer spending.

Tim Stacey, chief executive of DFS, said the furniture retailer was "operating in one of the toughest economic climates we have experienced".

DFS, which sells its made-to-order sofas from about 120 sites in the UK and the Republic of Ireland, as well as online, said in March that the cost of living squeeze was resulting in shoppers cutting back on big-ticket items like sofas, leading the wider market to a 15 to 20 per cent fall in sales volumes this year.

Investors were undeterred by the update as DFS stuck to its previous forecasts and said it still expected profits of between £30 million and £35 million for 2024. Shares in DFS, which have lost 26 per cent in the past year, rose by 6¾p, or 6.3 per cent, to 114p.

"We expect to generate a modest year-on-year increase in profit before tax in 2024 despite a relatively weak market," Stacey said.

Neil Shah of Edison Group, the investor relations consultancy, said the retailer "has felt the effects of prevailing market conditions and lower than expected sales, as the cost of living crisis dampens demand".

Analysts at Jefferies gave DFS a "buy" rating, seeing it as "very well placed to benefit when the sofa market does see an improved trend".

Next completes forecast hat-trick

Isabella Fish Retail Editor

An improved labour market has helped bolster sales at Next, which yesterday raised its annual profit forecast for the third time in four months.

Lord Wolfson of Aspley Guise, the chief executive, said: "One of the things that has made an enormous difference to people's ability to cope with the cost of living crisis has been the ability for people to go out and get extra hours … that has been very important."

The number of people in employment rose to a record high in the latest quarter with increases in the number of both employees and the self-employed, according to official statistics.

"The good news is that we're able to recruit where we need to," Wolfson said. "Technology and warehousing staff are much, much easier to recruit."

The retailer, which trades from about 500 shops in the UK and is considered a bellwether for the high street, said inflation-linked wage rises and warm weather at the start of summer had encouraged shoppers to refresh their wardrobes. Total sales at the FTSE 100 company were up 5.4 per cent year-on-year to reach £2.6 billion during the first six months as sunny weather in June increased consumer spending. Full-price sales increased 3.2 per cent.

Online sales reached almost £1.5 billion, a year-on-year increase of 5 per cent. Retail sales were up by 0.5 per cent to £885 million and Next Finance sales rose 7.1 per cent to £143.1 million.

Profit before tax was up 4.8 per cent to £420 million and the company expects full-year profits of £875 million, up from a previously guided £845 million. It also believes that it can deliver £46 million more in cost savings this year than originally planned. The Leicester-based fashion and homeware retailer, which has a record of under-promising and over-delivering, admitted that it had been "overly cautious about the prospects for sales in the current year", adding: "We underestimated the support nominal wage increases and a robust employment market would give to our top line.

"We also believe the exceptionally warm weather in late May and June served to significantly boost sales of our summer clothing at a critical time (a factor we need to bear in mind when it comes to our forecast for next year)."

Next said introducing new designs more frequently and adding more items at the top and middle of its price range had helped it appeal to a broader audience. "Fashion has always been about newness but it appears to us that trends are moving faster. Customers are willing to adopt new looks more rapidly than they have been for some time," the company told the City.

The Next boss was positive about the year ahead and expected that inflationary pressures on selling prices and operating costs would continue to ease. "Inflation is coming down across every element of the supply chain," he said.

"We don't think prices have come down much, but we think inflation will ease dramatically."

He said there was nothing he could see in terms of wage inflation, energy inflation and cost of goods "that suggests interest rates need to go up to cool the economy further, but we have a very narrow view into the economy. The Bank of England knows much more than we do."

The Bank left its interest rate unchanged at 5.25 per cent yesterday, a day after inflation fell unexpectedly.

Richard Chamberlain, an analyst at RBC Capital Markets, said Next has potential to offer "a strong omni-channel and cash-returns story long term. It should benefit from its broad range and strong omnichannel offer, with fast, highly automated logistics and a well-developed customer base."

Shares in Next, which have risen by 21 per cent in the past year, closed up 244p, or 3.4 per cent, at £73.50.

Joules buy-up taught us a lesson, says Wolfson

The boss of Next says he has learnt a "valuable lesson" after paying too much for Joules and reassured investors that he will not let the retailer become a "corporate blob" by acquiring too many brands (Isabella Fish writes).

Lord Wolfson of Aspley Guise, Next chief executive, admitted yesterday that the company had overpaid for Joules when it bought the chain out of administration for £34 million last year.

Wolfson said the company had looked at the business, which had been turning over £200 million a year, and got the cost base wrong. "The big lesson for us is that when you buy a business in distress, whatever the top line looks like before you buy it, take a hatchet to it, get the cost base of the business right before you go in, because that's the time to do it — and don't be optimistic," he said. "That was a very valuable lesson."

He was confident, however, that Joules "has a future and a long-term place in the market. We think Joules is still a fantastic brand."

Wolfson's comments came as he set out to assure investors that he has no intention of using the company's strong performance to embark on an acquisition spree, after recently buying the likes of Reiss, Cath Kidston, Gap and Made.com.

He said he would only buy businesses that add value to its Total Platform — where it provides a host of online services for different brands — otherwise "there is a real risk we could end up like some of the corporate blobs".

He added, however, that he would not rule out buying more brands that would help to drive growth.

"We're not cash-constrained, so the pace will not be dictated by our desire, it will be availability of businesses that hit the right criteria … which is a high bar," he said.

For the firms that Next scooped out of administration, partnered with or invested in, the Total Platform is a way to leverage the group's size to grow the business via services such as logistics, distribution and customer service.

Next also sells third-party brands online via its Label business, which is primarily for commission, and through its licensing unit.

Business

Vet boss launches defence of healthy profit margins

Alex Ralph

The chief executive of one of the UK's biggest veterinary companies has rejected concerns about profiteering after the competition regulator launched a review of the market.

The Competition and Markets Authority began looking this month into how services for household pets were bought and sold in the £2 billion sector amid concerns about vet costs rising faster than the rate of inflation.

CVS Group posted full-year results yesterday showing revenues up 9.8 per cent to £608.3 million and a 49.7 per cent increase in profit before tax to £53.9 million in the year to June 30.

Richard Fairman, chief executive of CVS, said reported profits had been flattered by a one-off impairment a year earlier from an acquisition CVS subsequently offloaded after concerns raised by the competition authority.

CVS's adjusted earnings margin rose from 19.4 per cent to 20 per cent, which was better than expected, but Fairman said this was boosted by research and development expenditure tax credits. Excluding that benefit, margins declined during the period, he said.

"There was an increase in our margins about three years ago because of the [IFRS-16] accounting change ... but beyond that our margin change has been slight; positive, but slight," he said.

CVS's adjusted profit margin was 14.4 per cent in 2012.

Asked whether CVS was raising prices above inflation, Fairman, 56, who was promoted from finance boss to chief executive in November 2019, said CVS had not disclosed its price changes but that revenue growth was at a similar rate to its employment costs, which was "by far" its largest cost.

He said that the company was focused on investing in its facilities, technology and workforce.

The industry has struggled with a "significant shortage" of vets, which has pushed up costs. The average number of vets employed by CVS rose by 6.5 per cent in the year.

CVS is one of the largest companies on London's alternative investment market, providing veterinary services in the UK, the Netherlands, the Republic of Ireland and most recently Australia, via the purchase of five practices for £23.8 million. The company has expanded through acquisitions and has about 500 practices.

Alongside the group's core veterinary practices division, it operates laboratories providing diagnostic services to CVS and third parties, crematoria providing pet cremation and clinical waste disposal, and an online retail business called Animed Direct.

Shares in CVS had slumped by about 28 per cent after the CMA announced its review of the market, suggesting concerns among investors that the regulator could impose price controls.

Yesterday the stock rose 101p, or 6.7 per cent, to £16.10, valuing the company at about £1.1 billion, and the final dividend was raised to 7.5p per share from 7p.

Fairman said CVS would support the regulator's review and that it was "impossible to speculate on what the outcome may be", but he was confident it would not hinder the company's acquisitions in the meantime.

CVS has made three recent acquisitions and the regulator was sent briefing papers prior to the announcement of its review. "That is a very clear signal that we can continue to acquire in the UK," Fairman said.

City analysts said the rerating in CVS's share price had been "overdone".

Peel Hunt, a joint house broker, said CVS's sales growth was helped by "more vets, more pets, the ageing profile of pets, higher-value procedures and pricing".

It added: "Price increases over the year have been below the rate of inflation and reflect the higher costs of drugs, consumables and people."

Analysts at Numis said: "We think CVS's margins and returns do not reflect super-normal profits or monopoly power". Berenberg said its analysis of CVS's historic margins did not support "a theory that CVS has taken advantage of its customers with consistent above-inflation price increases that have driven profitability".

Behind the story

Amid the cost of living squeeze, a rise in pet ownership and the consolidation of veterinary services, the competition regulator announced a review of the market this month.

The intervention from the Competition and Markets Authority turned the spotlight on an industry that had been under less scrutiny than many consumer-facing businesses.

Almost two thirds of households in the UK own a pet, a number that rose significantly during the pandemic.

The market has been transformed over the past decade by consolidation. Independent practices have fallen from comprising 89 per cent of Britain's veterinary industry in 2013 to 45 per cent in 2021.

The regulator is worried that pet owners are struggling to access the information they need about prices and treatment options, which would help them to make "good choices" about which vet to use and which services to purchase.

Investors have sold shares in CVS Group and Pets at Home, listed veterinary companies exposed to the review, but City analysts believe that the sell-off has gone too far. Davy, the broker, said there appeared to be "little risk of price controls being introduced".

Berenberg also expects any focus from the regulator to be on "sunlight remedies", requiring better-quality consumer information and price transparency.



US bounce for travel caterer

The owner of Upper Crust has raised its annual earnings guidance thanks to the bounceback in travel and strong trade in the United States (Dominic Walsh writes). Despite the



Diageo's one to watch for America

Dominic Walsh

Diageo wasted no time in kicking off its next succession process yesterday by appointing one of Fortune's "most powerful women to watch" to the role of chief executive for North America.

Sally Grimes, formerly chief executive of Clif Bar & Company, a US organic energy-bar maker, joins less than four months after the sudden death of Sir Ivan Menezes, Diageo's group chief executive for the previous decade.

His death, at the age of 63, came a few weeks before his planned retirement. Diageo had anointed Debra Crew, 52, chief operating officer, as chief executive in waiting.

Crew and Menezes both ran Diageo's North American operations before being elevated to the top job. Although Crew has only just taken on the CEO role, analysts said Grimes, 53, was being given the chance to prove she has what it takes to eventually follow in Crew's footsteps at Diageo, whose brands include Johnnie Walker and Guinness. Grimes's CV includes senior roles with Tyson Foods, Kraft Foods and Newell Brands. At Clif Bar she led a ten-year strategic growth plan, ultimately completing the sale of the company to Mondelez International, the snacks group, last year.

Grimes, who made the Fortune list in 2019 after being recognised as one of Fast Company's top 100 most creative people in business seven years earlier, will report to Crew and will join the Diageo executive committee. She has been a non-executive director at companies including Beyond Meat and Silver Oak Winery.

Claudia Schubert, who was appointed president for Diageo North America almost a year ago, has been promoted to the new role of president and chief operating officer for North America, reporting to Grimes.

One analyst said the presence of three women in such leading roles was testimony to Menezes's approach to diversity and inclusion, a key factor in his nomination for a knighthood.

Sally Grimes, who becomes Diageo's chief executive for North America, will also join the group's executive committee



ALAMY



SSP, which owns Upper Crust, operates outlets in stations and airports

upgrade amid a recovery in passenger numbers, shares in SSP Group, which operates bars and cafés at stations and airports in 36 countries, were down 19½p, or 8 per cent, at 225p.

Britain's biggest transport caterer said that revenue for the last 16 weeks of the year was expected to reach 116 per cent of 2019 levels, up from 112 per cent at the June update.

The company, which has franchises with Burger King, Marks & Spencer and Starbucks, and owns brands such as Urban Crave, a "street food" concept, reported that momentum was particularly strong in North America, which accounts for a quarter of group revenue.

It expects revenues in the region over the 16 weeks to the end of September to reach 127 per cent of 2019 levels.

Continental Europe is expected to reach 115 per cent of pre-pandemic levels, despite protests and travel disruption in France, while the Rest of World division is expected to hit 132 per cent amid strong passenger numbers in India and Egypt.

In the UK and Ireland, sales are expected to strengthen to 100 per cent of 2019 levels, with the continuing UK rail strikes being more than offset by improving performance.

The company's new guidance for 2023 results is for revenue of £3 billion and underlying earnings of £280 million, which it said it would deliver despite the strengthening of the pound against most major currencies.

For 2024 it forecasts earnings of £325 million to £375 million, excluding a potential currency hit of £20 million.

Shields falls on sword at AI drugs developer

Helen Cahill

Baroness Shields has stepped down as chief executive of BenevolentAI as the drugs developer pushes ahead with a widespread restructuring.

Shields, 61, a former technology adviser to David Cameron, said she would become a strategic adviser to the business after leading the board of directors for five years.

Her departure comes after the firm cut around half of its workforce of 360 and revealed plans to reduce its laboratory space to save £45 million. Nicholas Keher also resigned as finance chief after just over a year in the post.

BenevolentAI uses artificial intelligence to develop new drugs and collects royalties from successful treatments developed by pharmaceutical companies such as AstraZeneca. The company was founded ten years ago by Ken Mulvany and is headquartered in London, with a research facility in Cambridge and offices in New York.

The pharmaceuticals business went public in Amsterdam through a blank-cheque merger last year that valued it at €1.5 billion. It was backed by the former star stockpicker Neil Woodford, but its shares declined from a listing price of €10 and last night stood at €0.98.

The company has pulled back on investment in its leading drug candidate aimed at treating eczema, with trials showing it was no more effective than a placebo. BenevolentAI is now focusing on other treatments for ulcerative colitis and brain cancer.

François Nader, BenevolentAI's chairman, will step up as acting chief executive as the company starts a search for a permanent replacement.

BenevolentAI also announced that revenue had increased by 9 per cent to £5.3 million for the six months to June 30. Normalised operating loss reduced by 21 per cent from £51.4 million to £40.6 million.

Nader said: "I want to thank Joanna [Shields] for her commitment over the last five years. Assuming the role of acting chief executive today, I commit to building upon these foundations as we continue to grow the business to maximise the potential that our advanced AI platform has to offer."

Money laundering risk for partners of cryptofirms

Ben Martin Banking Editor

Social media companies and app stores risk committing money-laundering offences if they work with cryptofirms involved in illegal financial promotions, the City regulator has said.

A clampdown by the Financial Conduct Authority on marketing of cryptoproducts is due to come into force on October 8. The regulator's new advertising rules include banning "refer a friend" bonuses, a requirement for cryptofirms to include clear risk warnings and the introduction of a cooling-off period for first-time investors.

The FCA warned that firms partnered with cryptocompanies also need to prepare for the changes.

"We are concerned that benefits obtained by unregistered cryptoasset businesses from illegal financial promotions could be criminal property, and that intermediaries are at risk of receiving and dealing with this criminal property," it said.

This includes fees earned by search engines, domain name registrars, social media platforms and app stores for hosting illegal financial marketing, and fees charged by payments firms.

"Businesses supporting unregistered cryptoasset firms may be at risk of committing money laundering offences," the regulator said.

It also warned that many cryptofirms themselves, especially those based overseas, appeared unprepared for the changes.

"Many of these firms have refused to engage with the FCA despite our best efforts," it said, raising "serious concerns about unregistered firms' readiness to comply with the new regime".

T BOOKS

A celebration of the quirky, the humorous and the brief

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Question marks over power play

DRAX

Share price fall this year 24%	Date subsidies will end 2027

News that the National Audit Office (NAO) plans to scrutinise the government's biomass strategy served as another reminder of the fragility of Drax's business model and how jittery this is making investors.

When the government reaffirmed in August that burning pelletised wood to generate electricity could play a key role in reducing dirty emissions, it barely triggered a response. The big reaction came a month later when the UK's independent public spending watchdog announced that it wanted to examine whether this expensive and controversial power generation process represented the best way to spend taxpayers' money.

Bullish analysts played down the importance of this potential setback. They noted that the NAO routinely did this sort of thing and did not wield enough influence to force the government to stop counting on Drax's biomass and carbon capture technologies to help it achieve its ambitious climate targets. These were reassuring words but not quite enough to make the doubt go away.

Drax's shares are down 24 per cent this year for a reason: the way it generates power is expensive, unviable without government subsidies and attracts a lot of scrutiny. That is not the sort of stuff usually associated with capital gains.

Promising to reduce the nation's reliance on fossil fuels and claiming that the energy it produces is carbon neutral has landed the FTSE 250 company billions of pounds in subsidies but generated much anger.

Some scientists dispute the theory that planting new trees absorbs the carbon emitted by burning pellets. Critics also point out that Drax's fuel materials come from North America and are mainly sent over in huge diesel-powered ships.

These are not the only worries weighing on the shares. Ofgem is investigating whether Drax breached sustainability rules after a BBC *Panorama* programme claimed that the company chopped down trees from precious forests. Biomass must mainly be procured from unwanted waste. And, last month, it was accused of using a loophole in the government's subsidy scheme to get out of paying up to £639 million of extra earnings to households.

Drax denies any wrongdoing.

However, it is still negative PR that is turning the heads of influential figures, including Ed Miliband, the shadow climate secretary, who said that Labour would review subsidies for biomass.

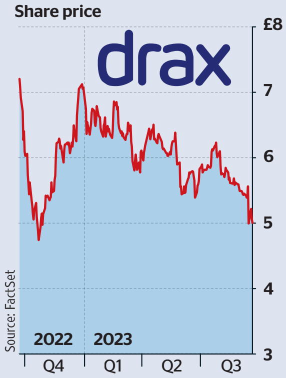
Existing subsidies are due to expire in 2027 and Drax is banking on them being renewed. Without government money it is in big trouble.

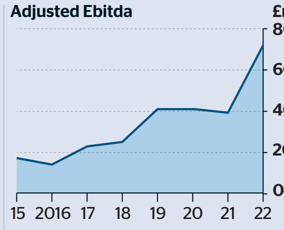
The company's long-term success also hinges on government funding to get technology that captures and stores emissions underground fitted. Biomass using bioenergy with carbon capture and storage (BECCS) is said to have zero emissions. BECCS has been touted as the only viable way for the UK and other countries to meet their ambitious climate targets but governments have not yet fully committed themselves.

Various threats and lofty profits captured from unusually high energy prices have left the shares, trading at four times forecast earnings and an enterprise value of three times earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortisation, looking deceptively cheap. Valuation multiples are less appealing when applying normalised profits and not necessarily low enough to compensate for the risks.

Drax could end up spearheading the UK's net-zero drive, making it big in the US, where the government is doling out green tax credits, and turning into an ultra-reliable dividend play. Or maybe not. A lot can go wrong and most investors will find that Drax is cheap for a reason.

Burn rate





21p Dividend per share

11% Percentage of UK renewable electricity generated by Drax

ADVICE Avoid
WHY The way Drax generates power is expensive, unviable without government subsidies and attracting a lot of scrutiny

WARPAINT LONDON

Market cap £232 million	First-half revenue growth 46%

Usually, a company reporting 46 per cent sales growth and a near doubling of profits would be rewarded with a rising share price. That wasn't the case for Warpaint London. Its valuation has jumped so much over the past year that investors opted to take profits instead.

The Aim-listed Warpaint is behind the cosmetic brand names W7 and Technic. Its affordable make-up is sold to consumers all over the world either directly online or, more commonly, via retailers such as Tesco, Boots and New Look.

The company's latest financials, covering the six months to June 30, tell us that business is booming. Warpaint's product range, which is renowned for being just as good as much more expensive brand names and reflecting all of the current fashions, is flying off shelves. And, unlike many other growth stocks, these revenues are not costing an arm and a leg to achieve.

Warpaint outsources production and doesn't rely on just one manufacturer. A variety of trusted partners can be called upon to quickly pump out quality goods at competitive prices.

That's just one of the ways management keeps a lid on expenses. Costs are minimised wherever possible, with the company able to reel in customers without acquisitions or much spending on innovation and marketing. The upshot is healthy profit margins, zero debt and constant dividend growth.

This great business model hasn't gone unnoticed: Warpaint's shares have risen 71 per cent this year. That kind of momentum comes with risk. In this territory, locking in gains, as we saw after the results, is common and investors can become very demanding.

On this particular occasion, investors taking a breather has created a buy opportunity. The shares trade hands at 18 times forecast earnings, a discount to the three-year average, and more sharp growth seems likely.

Warpaint is a very well-run business, offering internationally loved products at cheap prices. It still has a small footprint in a huge market and plays to the strengths of a weakening economy. The odd pullback shouldn't rattle investors.

ADVICE Buy
WHY This company has lots more growth potential

NEWS IN BRIEF

Cuts hit Halma orders

Spending cuts in hospitals have led to a slowdown in orders for blood pressure monitors and nurse call systems made by Halma companies. The FTSE 100 group bemoaned "budgetary pressures at healthcare providers" for "slower order intake"over the past six months. Hospitals had been investing more freely over the pandemic but Halma suggested that they have started to rein in spending. However, bosses remain confident of "good organic constant currency revenue growth" and for profit margins to be about 20 per cent.

Costly staple shortages

Staple foods such as rice, tea bags, spaghetti and baked beans can cost more than three times as much if budget versions are unavailable, according to a study by Which? The consumer group called on supermarkets to ensure that they stock value ranges across all outlets after discovering how much more consumers were paying when cheaper versions were not available, which it said was often the experience of those who have to rely on local convenience stores.

US unemployment falls

The number of Americans filing new claims for unemployment benefits fell to an eight-month low last week. The US Labor Department also said the number who wanted jobs but could not find work in early September was the smallest since January. Initial claims for state unemployment benefits dropped 20,000 to a seasonally adjusted 201,000. Claims could increase in coming weeks as a strike by the United Auto Workers leads to carmakers temporarily laying off workers.

Coty en route to Paris

Coty, the parent company of CoverGirl cosmetics, is going ahead with its plan to list on the Paris Stock Exchange, possibly in the coming weeks, Bloomberg reported. The company wants to bolster its presence in Europe and tap into new investors. This week Coty raised its annual core sales forecast, boosted by higher prices and strong demand, particularly in its high-end segment with cosmetics and fragrances from brands such as Hugo Boss, Gucci and Burberry.

PRICES

Major indices

New York	
Dow Jones	34070.42 (-370.46)
Nasdaq Composite	13223.99 (-245.14)
S&P 500	4330.00 (-72.20)
Tokyo	
Nikkei 225	32571.03 (-452.75)
Hong Kong	
Hang Seng	17655.41 (-230.19)
Amsterdam	
AEX Index	731.72 (-6.60)
Sydney	
AO	7266.60 (-95.30)
Frankfurt	
DAX	15571.86 (-209.73)
Singapore	
Straits	3202.81 (-39.19)
Brussels	
BEL20	3648.02 (-62.98)
Paris	
CAC-40	7213.90 (-116.89)
Zurich	
SMI Index	11084.74 (-69.37)
DJ Euro Stoxx 50	4212.59 (-63.39)
London	
FTSE 100	7678.62 (-53.03)
FTSE 250	18638.55 (-73.82)
FTSE 350	4214.60 (-27.40)
FTSE Eurotop 100	3592.52 (-45.20)
FTSE All-Shares	4171.07 (-26.71)
FTSE Non Financials	5080.14 (-37.32)
techMARK 100	6366.08 (-68.90)
Bargains	n/a
US$	1.2298 (-0.0028)
Euro	1.1528 (-0.0044)
£:SDR	0.98 (+0.00)
Exchange Index	81.26 (-0.19)
Bank of England official close (4pm)	
CPI	131.35 Aug (2015 = 100)
RPI	376.60 Aug (Jan 1987 = 100)
RPIX	371.90 Jul (Jan 1987 = 100)
Morningstar Long Commodity	677.16 (+5.72)
Morningstar Long/Short Commod	4703.45 (+27.75)

London Financial Futures

	Period	Open	High	Low	Sett	Vol	Open Int
Long Gilt	SEP 23	96.280	96.280	96.240	95.880	24	166
	Dec 23	96.270	96.480	95.150	95.870	235910	493006
3-Mth Sterling	Sep 23						
	Dec 23						
	Mar 24						
	Jun 24						
	Sep 24						
3-Mth Euribor	Dec 23	95.975	95.990	95.965	95.990	122445	653184
	Mar 24	96.015	96.040	96.000	96.035	132264	605543
	Jun 24	96.145	96.180	96.115	96.170	141051	541563
	Sep 24	96.325	96.380	96.295	96.365	100849	246851
	Dec 24	96.540	96.590	96.490	96.575	127985	376161
3-Mth Euroswiss	Dec 23						
	Mar 24						
	Jun 24						
	Sep 24						
FTSE100	Dec 23	7743.0	7798.0	7713.5	7730.5	104668	498655
	Mar 24	7825.5	7825.5	7825.5	7829.5	22	2280
FTSEurofirst 80	Dec 23				5751.0		
	Mar 24				5778.0		

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Commodities

ICIS pricing (London 7.30pm)

Crude Oils ($/barrel FOB)

Brent Physical	94.46	-1.19
BFOE(Nov)	93.39	-0.23
BFOE(Dec)	92.36	-0.09
WTI(Nov)	89.63	-0.03
WTI(Dec)	88.32	-0.02

Products ($/MT)

Spot CIF NW Europe (prompt delivery)

Premium Unld	967.00	970.00	-2.00
Gasoil EEC	1018.00	1019.00	+43.50
3.5 Fuel Oil	556.00	560.00	+1.00
Naphtha	717.00	731.00	+6.00

ICE Futures

Gas Oil

Oct	994.25-993.75	Jan	903.25-902.75
Nov	960.75-960.50	Feb	888.00-887.25
Dec	924.00-923.50		Volume: 864925

Brent (9.00pm)

Nov	93.55-93.54	Feb	90.25-90.19
Dec	92.50-92.48	Mar	89.26-89.21
Jan	91.32-91.30		Volume: 2203920

LIFFE

Cocoa

Dec	2997-2995	Mar	2705-2640
Mar	2933-2931	May	2749-2634
May	2851-2847	Jul	2583 BID
Jul	2783-2777		
Sep	2793-2702		
Dec	2719-2700		Volume: 66748

RobustaCoffee

Sep	2699-2668	May	2310-2250
Nov	2463-2461	Jul	2375-2280
Jan	2377-2376		
Mar	2341-2320		Volume: 16027

White Sugar (FOB)

Reuters		Aug	687.00-684.50
		Oct	662.70-660.00
Dec	732.10-731.50	Dec	648.40-628.10
Mar	726.90-719.20	Mar	643.00-625.00
May	713.20-712.00		Volume: 68694

KUMAR SRISKANDAN/ALAMY



Boss says his city pubs are having a ball

Britain's pubs may be taking a hammering from rising costs and rail strikes but the City Pub Group is faring better than most (Dominic Walsh writes).

"The reason is we haven't geared up our balance sheet," Clive Watson, the executive chairman, said. "We've got £8 million of debt and £171 million of assets. So we are massively undergeared, and don't need to worry about interest rates."

The location of its pubs in "great cities" is also important, he said. "Students are coming back big time, tourists are coming back, workers are coming back as well."

He said Christmas bookings were well ahead of last year, while the Rugby World Cup was drawing in customers.

The group, which was founded in 2011 and floated in 2017, has 51 premium pubs, mostly freeholds, in southern England and Wales. The Phene features in *Made in Chelsea*, the reality television show in which both Watson's daughters have appeared and he has had the odd cameo.

Watson, 61, said the group was in a strong position to take advantage of "appropriately priced opportunities". His plan is to increase the size of the group to 70 pubs within the next two to three years.

In the half year to June 25, revenues were up by 21 per cent to £31.7 million, with underlying earnings down 2.9 per cent at £3.3 million. Adjusted pre-tax profit fell from £1.3 million to £800,000.

The shares were broadly flat at 85p.

The day's biggest movers

Company	Change
JD Sports Strong half-year results	9.0%
Essentra Acquires BMP Tappi for €33.5 million	3.9%
Next Lifts profit outlook	3.4%
Redrow Bank of England presses pause on interest rate rises	2.4%
Frasers Group Launches £80 share buyback	2.0%
Halma Disappointing half-year update	-2.5%
Antofagasta Lower copper prices	-3.2%
SSP Flags foreign exchange headwinds	-8.0%
Ceres Power Holdings Investors take profits following recent sharp rise	-9.6%
Ocado Exane PNP Paribas downgrades to "underperform"	-19.9%

Resurgent dollar takes the shine off for miners



Jessica Newman **Market report**

The dominant global mining companies acted as the biggest drags on London's premier share index yesterday as investors responded to a hint by the US Federal Reserve that another interest rate rise was to come.

The prices of copper, aluminium, gold and other base metals were hit by a resurgent greenback, which rose against a sliding pound on increased speculation that the Fed could raise rates again before the year end. A firmer dollar makes dollar-denominated commodities dearer for other currency holders.

It meant that London's crop of miners lost their lustre, including **Antofagasta**, which fell by 46p, or 3.2 per cent, to £14.09, and **Rio Tinto**, which shed 144p, or 2.7 per cent, to £51.40. **Anglo American** lost 61p, or 2.7 per cent, to £22.35 while **Glencore** was 11¾p, or 2.6 per cent, worse off at 452p and **Fresnillo** gave up 12¼p, or 2.1 per cent, to 580¼p.

It was an up-and-down day for London's leading stock exchange. It started the day deep in the red, but investors breathed a sigh of relief after the Bank of England's decision to leave interest rates on hold and the index pared most of its early losses.

However, the prospect of higher rates for longer left the senior index 53.03 points, or 0.7 per cent, lower at 7,678.62. The more UK-focused FTSE 250 dropped 73.82 points, or 0.4 per cent, to 18,638.55.

Ocado stood out on the Footsie for all the wrong reasons. Shares in the online grocer, which have improved more than 15 per cent in the past 12 months, fell by 160½p, or 19.9 per cent, to a two-month low of 647¾p after analysts at Exane stamped an "underperform" recommendation on the stock amid concerns over subdued growth in its retail business.

Another heavy faller was **SSP**, which settled near the bottom of the mid-cap leaderboard as it suffered a loss of 19½p, or 8 per cent, to 225p. Appetite for the travel food outlet operator faded after it said a stronger pound would hit core profit in 2024.

It was a different story for many other big retailers. **JD Sports** raced 12p, or 9 per cent, higher to 145p as the tracksuit and trainer seller reported half-year profits that were ahead of consensus estimates. Another profit upgrade from **Next** lifted the high-street stalwart's shares by 244p, or 3.4 per cent, to £73.50.

The positive updates were a cue for investors to throw other retail stocks into their baskets. Mike Ashley's **Frasers Group**, which launched a fresh £80 million share buyback, rose 16p, or 2 per cent, to 813p. **Kingfisher** added 4¾p, or 2.2 per cent, to 220½p and **B&M European Value Retail** gained 5½p, or 1 per cent, to 584½p.

Essentra was among the biggest risers in the mid-cap index, closing up 5¾p, or 3.9 per cent, to 153½p after the components manufacturer and distributor said it had bought BMP Tappi, an Italian manufacturer and distributor of plastic cups and plugs.

News that **Capita** has been awarded two government contracts worth a total of £565 million lifted the outsourcer 3.1 per cent to 17½p.

Shares in **CT Automotive Group**, which designs and supplies interior trim and parts including cup-holders and armrests, revved up 5p, or 12.5 per cent, to 45p as its half-year revenues of $68.2 million exceeded the board's expectations, contributing to the Portsmouth-based business swinging back into the black.

Neometals, which recycles metals for reuse in electric vehicle batteries, was another impressive riser on Aim, improving 1½p, or 6.8 per cent, to 23½p, after receiving a patent for its lithium-ion battery recycling process from the Australian Patent Office.

Wall Street report

Indices fell for a third day with investor sentiment moving firmly to "risk off" mode while they digested the prospect of rates remaining higher for longer. The Dow Jones industrial average fell 370.46 points or 1.1 per cent to close at 34,070.42

MANUFACTURING

Strix stricken by weak first half

The value of Strix Group's shares fell to its lowest level on record yesterday on the back of the kettle components group slashing its interim dividend after a poor first half.

The Aim-listed company reported a 41.4 per cent fall in pre-tax profits to £6.8 million in the six months to June 30, despite higher revenues of £65.2 million, which was mainly due to the first-time inclusion of Billi sales. Strix's £38 million acquisition of the Australian water systems supplier and a higher interest-rate environment drove up net debts by 51.9 per cent to £93.1 million.



Strix Group's pre-tax profits were down by more than 41 per cent

Owing to its performance the board cut its interim dividend to 0.9p a share, compared with 2.75p a year earlier. Mark Bartlett, chief executive of Strix, said that the "macro headwinds have resulted in a reduction in demand in kettle controls in the key export regulated markets of UK and Germany during the first half and a slower than anticipated recovery".

While recent order rates were tracking in a positive direction, the company now anticipated "a decrease in the short-term revenues within this category".

The shares were 35¼p, or 38.4 per cent, lower at 56½p.

London Grain Futures

LIFFE Wheat (close £/t)

Nov	189.75	Jan	unq	Mar	unq
May	200.25	Jul	unq	Volume: 966	

London Metal Exchange

(Official)

	Cash	3mth	Dec 22
Copper Gde A ($/tonne)	8100.5-8101.0	8169.5-8170.0	8275.0-8285.0
Lead ($/tonne)	2203.5-2204.0	2184.0-2185.0	2192.0-2197.0
Zinc Spec Hi Gde ($/tonne)	2473.0-2475.0	2502.0-2503.0	2538.0-2543.0
Alum Hi Gde ($/tonne)	2166.0-2166.5	2211.0-2212.0	2347.0-2352.0
Nickel ($/tonne)	18950.0-18955.0	19200.0-19205.0	20280.0-20330.0
Tin ($/tonne) (15mth)	25550.0-25650.0	25800.0-25850.0	25505.0-25555.0

Gold/Precious metals (US dollars per ounce)

Owing to a technical issue, the gold fix prices are from Wednesday.

Bullion: Open $1929.33

Close $1918.04-1918.27 High $1930.35

Low $1914.32

AM $1930.15 **PM** $1943.35

Platinum $ (£)

Silver $23.31 (£18.95)

Palladium $ (£)

European money deposits %

Currency	1mth	3mth	6mth	12mth
Dollar	0.13	0.20	0.29	0.55
Sterling	4.20	5.50	4.74	0.81
Euro	0.10	0.15	0.20	0.50

Money rates %

Base Rates Clearing Banks 5.25 ECB Refi 4.50 US Fed Fund 5.25-5.50

Halifax Mortgage Rate (SVR) 8.74

Sterling spot and forward rates

Mkt Rates for	Range	Close	1 month	3 month
Copenhagen	8.5802-8.6371	8.5997-8.6017	129ds	399ds
Euro	1.1591-1.1511	1.1539-1.1537	10pr	31pr
Montreal	1.6544-1.6635	1.6573-1.6574	5ds	12ds
New York	1.2246-1.2331	1.2299-1.2300	1pr	5pr
Oslo	13.218-13.342	13.244-13.250	96ds	281ds
Stockholm	13.593-13.787	13.739-13.746	175ds	535ds
Tokyo	181.09-182.92	181.45-181.48	85ds	260ds
Zurich	1.1067-1.1166	1.1116-1.1117	35ds	107ds

Premium = pr   Discount = ds

Dollar rates

Australia	1.5580-1.5582
Canada	1.3476-1.3477
Denmark	6.9928-6.9938
Euro	0.9381-0.9382
Hong Kong	7.8208-7.8209
Japan	147.55-147.55
Malaysia	4.6830-4.6890
Norway	10.769-10.774
Singapore	1.3671-1.3672
Sweden	11.173-11.175
Switzerland	0.9038-0.9038

Other Sterling

Argentina peso	430.50-430.52
Australia dollar	1.9162-1.9164
Bahrain dinar	0.4601-0.4670
Brazil real	6.0524-6.0561
Euro	1.1537-1.1539
Hong Kong dollar	9.6175-9.6189
India rupee	102.23-102.25
Indonesia rupiah	18944-18945
Kuwait dinar KD	0.3785-0.3808
Malaysia ringgit	5.7598-5.7672
New Zealand dollar	2.0731-2.0749
Singapore dollar	1.6812-1.6816
S Africa rand	23.256-23.268
U A E dirham	4.5157-4.5160

Exchange rates

	Bid	Change
Australia $	1.914	+0.01
Canada $	1.658	
Denmark Kr	8.592	-0.03
Euro €	1.153	
Hong Kong $	9.610	-0.09
Hungary	447.103	+3.32
Indonesia	18891.223	-178.36
Israel Shk	4.689	-0.03
Japan Yen	181.196	-1.93
New Zealand $	2.072	
Norway Kr	13.245	-0.02
Poland	5.322	-0.03
Russia	117.771	-1.17
S Africa Rd	23.209	-0.04
Sweden Kr	13.749	+0.04
Switzerland Fr	1.109	
Turkey Lira	33.313	-0.21
USA $	1.229	-0.01

Rates supplied by Morningstar

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ALLIANZ GLOBAL INVESTORS
Inv Serv: 020 7065 1400 Helpline: 0800 317 573

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Gilt Yield A ‡@	206.01	...	+0.27	1.05
Strategic Bond Fund ‡@	133.96	...	-0.62	...
UK Corp Bond C ‡@	104.79	...	-0.78	3.87
UK Eqty C ‡@	6317.26	...	-14.91	...
UK Eqty Inc A ‡@	307.20	...	-0.97	4.75
UK Gwth A ‡@	7764.72	...	-32.53	...
UK Index A Inc ‡@	1423.81	...	-5.83	...
UK Mid Cap A ‡@	4654.61	...	-11.35	...

ARTEMIS FUND MGRS LTD
0800 092 2051
Authorised Inv Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Capital R Acc ‡@	2199.65	...	-5.34	...
Euro Opps R Acc ‡@	91.26	...	-0.48	...
Euro Opps R Inc ‡@	85.36	...	-0.46	...
European Growth R Acc ‡@	425.32	...	-2.99	1.77
Global Energy R Acc ‡@	39.04	...	-0.07	...
Global Growth R Acc ‡@	352.92	...	-0.89	...
Global Income R Acc ‡@	165.70	...	-0.96	...
Global Income R Inc ‡@	101.88	...	-0.59	...
Global Select R Acc ‡@	153.22	...	-0.93	...
High Income R Inc ‡@	61.64	...	-0.14	6.46
Income R Acc ‡@	516.65	...	-2.48	3.97
Income R Inc ‡@	221.78	...	-1.06	4.09
Monthly Dist R Inc ‡@	63.89	...	-0.13	5.05
Strategic Assets R Acc ‡@	89.00	...	-0.14	...
Strategic Bond R M Acc ‡@	95.07	...	-0.16	3.97
Strategic Bond R M Inc ‡@	48.91	...	-0.08	4.07
Strategic Bond R Q Acc ‡@	94.89	...	-0.17	4.07
Strategic Bond R Q Inc ‡@	48.66	...	-0.09	4.15
UK Growth R Acc ‡@	742.99	...	-6.34	2.13
UK Smaller Cos R Acc ‡@	1796.40	...	-1.60	1.54
UK Special Sits R Acc ‡@	714.71	...	-2.44	...

AXA FRAMLINGTON UNIT MGMT LTD
Dling: 0845 602 1952 Priv Clients: 0845 777 5511

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Equity Inc ‡@	572.40	...	-2.70	4.43
Gilt Acc @	201.30	211.80	+0.10	1.08
Gilt Inc @	74.35	78.24	-0.39	1.09
Health Acc ‡@	3023.00	...	+15.00	...
Jap Smlr Co Ac @	62.56	66.09	-0.19	0.30
Managed Inc ‡@	138.30	...	...	4.20
Monthly Inc Inc ‡@	206.80	...	-0.50	...
UK Growth Inc ‡@	208.90	...	-0.80	...
UK Select Opps Inc ‡@	1800.00	...	-6.00	...
UK Sml Cos Inc ‡@	250.30	...	+0.30	...

AXA FUND MANAGERS LTD
Admin & Enq 0117 989 0808
AXA Trusts

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Gen Acc ‡@	2101.00	...	+6.00	...
Gen Inc ‡@	1079.00	...	-2.00	...

UK/Global Investment Companies

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Euro Acc A ‡@	234.70	...	...	...
Extra Inc Inc B ‡@	86.74	...	+0.24	1.16
Global Gwth Acc R ‡@	288.10	...	+4.10	0.52
Japan Acc A ‡@	162.30	...	+2.20	1.51
Pac Gwth Acc A ‡@	479.80	...	-17.60	2.30

CIS UNIT MANAGERS LTD
08457 46 46 46

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
European Gwth ‡@	209.10	...	-1.60	1.69
Sus Leaders ‡@	785.40	...	-1.30	...
UK Growth ‡@	621.90	...	-2.00	...
UK Income ‡@	204.10	...	-0.70	5.04

CLOSE FUND MANAGEMENT LTD
0870 606 6402

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Beacon Inv ‡	84.88	...	+0.35	...

Dealing: 020 7426 6232

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Winchester ‡	3712.11	...	+1.00	0.99

COLUMBIA THREADNEEDLE INVESTMENTS
Enqs: 0870 601 6183 Dealing: 0870 601 6083
Share Class 1 - Retail

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corporate Bd ‡@	49.99	...	-0.31	1.57
Emerging Mkts ‡@	116.50	...	-0.50	...
Euro Gwth & Inc 1 ‡@	1223.00	...	-8.00	...
Extra Inc Bond ‡@	43.72	...	-0.05	1.78
FTSE All-Shr Track ‡@	427.70	...	-2.10	...
Global Gwth SC1 ‡@	299.50	...	-2.10	...
High Inc Trst @	11.22	11.82	-0.02	5.41
Max Inc Bond ‡@	43.08	...	-0.03	3.90
Multi Man Caut ‡@	70.41	...	...	3.18
Multi Man Distr ‡@	60.44	...	...	3.37
North Amer ‡@	894.40	...	-1.80	...
Pacific Gwth ‡@	477.40	...	...	0.04
Strategic Bd ‡@	193.20	...	-0.20	1.33
UK Equity ‡@	3446.00	...	+2.00	...
UK Gwth & Inc Acc 1 ‡@	658.50	...	...	...
UK Gwth & Inc Dist ‡@	234.70	...	...	...
UK Smaller Cos ‡@	969.80	...	-1.70	0.20

EDENTREE INV MGMT LTD
0800 358 3010

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Resp & Sust Sterling Bond ‡	83.26	...	-0.10	4.33
Resp & Sust Eurp Eq ‡	331.10	...	-3.60	2.06
Resp & Sust Glbl Eq ‡	338.00	...	-2.10	...
Resp & Sust Mgd Income ‡	118.90	...	-0.50	5.13
Resp & Sust UK Eq ‡	214.10	...	-1.30	...
Resp & Sust UK Equity Opps ‡	274.90	...	+0.10	...

FIDELITY INTERNATIONAL
Private Clnts 0800 414161 Broker Dlgs 0800 414181

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Amer Spec Sits ‡@	2353.00	...	-1.00	...
American ‡@	5588.00	...	-36.00	...
Euro Opps ‡@	566.30	...	-2.90	...
European ‡@	3477.00	...	-24.00	0.83
Extra Income ‡@	22.03	...	-0.01	6.06
Glob Spec Sits ‡@	5654.00	...	-37.00	...
Global Focus ‡@	2895.00	...	-16.00	...
International ‡@	149.50	...	+0.20	0.08
Japan ‡@	608.40	...	-3.40	0.74
Moneybldr Bal ‡@	42.58	...	-0.09	4.16
Moneybldr Glob	327.60	327.60	-0.10	0.21
Moneybldr Gwth ‡@	76.12	...	-0.95	...
Moneybldr Inc ‡@	28.25	...	-0.16	4.99
Moneybldr UK Ind ‡@	131.85	...	-0.56	...
Special Sits ‡@	4540.00	...	-9.00	...
Wealthbuilder	69.75	72.18	+0.53	...

HALIFAX INVESTMENT FUND MGRS LTD
01296 386 386
Authorised Inv Funds
Share Class `C

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corporate Bond ‡@	32.04	...	-0.02	3.51
Ethical ‡@	114.70	...	-0.20	...
European ‡@	114.30	...	-0.50	1.94
Far Eastern ‡	111.60	...	-0.70	3.42
Fund of Inv Tst ‡@	136.50	...	-0.90	0.60
Intl Gwth ‡	132.50	...	-0.40	...
Japanese ‡	77.72	...	+0.11	...
North Amer ‡	161.20	...	-0.30	0.35
Smaller Cos ‡@	102.20	...	-0.30	1.62
Special Sits ‡@	49.04	...	-0.20	1.06
UK Equity Inc ‡@	93.08	...	-0.40	3.99
UK FTSE 100 IT ‡@	72.03	...	-0.32	...
UK FTSE All-S IT ‡@	80.59	...	-0.36	...
UK Growth ‡@	84.83	...	-0.31	...

HSBC GLOBAL ASSET MGMT (UK) LTD
Enq: 0845 745 6123 Dlg: 0845 745 6126 Mon-Fri 8-6
HSBC Index Tracker Investment Funds (OEIC)

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Amer Ind Acc ‡@	995.01	...	-5.05	1.24
Amer Ind Inc ‡@	788.61	...	-4.00	2.45
Euro Ind Acc ‡@	1204.48	...	-10.77	2.63
Euro Ind Inc ‡@	750.29	...	-6.70	2.70
FTSE 100 Ind Acc ‡@	285.44	...	-1.39	...
FTSE 100 Ind Inc ‡@	127.47	...	-0.62	...
FTSE 250 Ind Acc ‡@	283.84	...	-1.02	3.62
FTSE 250 Ind Inc ‡@	169.22	...	-0.40	3.07
FTSE All-S Acc ‡@	721.82	...	-3.32	...
FTSE All-S Inc ‡@	358.64	...	-1.65	...
Jap Ind Acc ‡@	154.35	...	-0.20	1.88
Jap Ind Inc ‡@	117.99	...	-0.15	1.92
Pac Ind Acc ‡@	489.74	...	-7.01	3.48
Pac Ind Inc ‡@	297.44	...	-4.26	3.61

HSBC Investment Funds (OEIC) - Retail Share Class

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Balanced Acc ‡@	246.88	...	-0.67	1.19
Balanced Inc ‡@	151.95	...	-0.14	...
Corp Bd Acc ‡@	265.74	...	-0.28	5.12
Corp Bd Inc ‡@	101.21	...	-0.11	3.56
Gilt & Fd Int Acc ‡@	497.78	...	+1.62	...
Gilt & Fd Int Inc ‡@	74.17	...	+0.24	...
Income Acc ‡@	722.93	...	-3.62	4.20
Income Inc ‡@	289.80	...	-1.45	4.34
Monthly Inc Acc ‡@	313.41	...	+0.77	3.21
Monthly Inc Inc ‡@	126.80	...	-0.48	4.09
UK Grth & Inc Ret B Acc ‡@	146.68	...	-0.69	...
UK Grth & Inc Ret B Inc ‡@	63.33	...	-0.29	...
UK Gth & Inc Acc ‡@	146.68	...	-0.69	...
UK Gth & Inc Inc ‡@	63.33	...	-0.29	...

HSBC Specialist Investment Funds (OEIC)

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
American Index Retail Acc ‡@	995.01	...	-5.05	1.24
American Index Retail Inc ‡@	788.61	...	-4.00	2.45
Asian Gth Acc ‡@	147.77	...	-0.07	...
Asian Gth Inc ‡@	130.99	...	-0.06	...
Chinese Eq Acc ‡@	513.81	...	+0.27	0.40
Chinese Eq Inc ‡@	434.76	...	+0.22	0.34
Euro Gth Acc ‡@	973.97	...	+4.05	...
Euro Gth Inc ‡@	817.05	...	+3.39	...

IGNIS ASSET MGMT
Dlg: 0141 222 8282

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
American Gth Inc @	322.55	340.42	-3.34	...
Balanced Growth @	262.17	276.69	-0.93	...
Balanced Growth Acc @	393.13	414.92	-1.40	...
Corporate Bond ‡@	99.69	...	-0.89	4.77
European Growth @	403.88	426.26	-3.57	...
European Growth Acc @	475.71	502.07	-4.21	...
Glob Gwth @	331.53	349.90	-3.09	0.12
Higher Yield @	83.98	88.64	-0.29	4.43
Higher Yield Acc @	275.04	290.28	-0.92	...
Japan @	49.06	51.78	-0.03	...
Managed @	130.89	138.15	-0.06	0.66
Managed Trust @	71.96	76.96	+0.17	...
Mngd Pfolio Inc @	95.54	100.84	-0.11	...
Pacific Grth @	498.71	526.34	-2.81	1.34
Smaller Comp @	756.24	798.14	+1.64	...
Smaller Cos @	628.94	663.79	+1.36	...

INSIGHT INVESTMENT FDS MANAGEMENT LTD
Client Servs: 0207 163 4000
Insight Investment Multi-Manager Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Well Bldr Bal Acc ‡@	96.05	...	-0.32	...
Well Bldr Gwth Acc ‡@	93.79	...	-0.36	...

INVESCO FUND MGRS LTD
Dling: 0800 085 8571 Inv Serv: 0800 085 8677
Brkr Serv: 0800 028 2121
INVESCO Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Str Inc N/Trl ‡@	323.57	...	-0.12	...

INVESCO PERPETUAL Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Childrens Acc ‡@	465.47	...	-1.57	2.32
Corp Bond Acc ‡@	198.74	...	-0.13	3.23
High Income Inc ‡@	317.98	...	-1.64	4.06
Income & Grth Inc ‡@	410.20	...	-1.28	3.32
Income Inc ‡@	1256.81	...	-4.09	3.60
Money Acc ‡@	94.57	...	+0.01	...
Monthly Inc Plus Inc ‡@	90.46	...	-0.03	6.27
UK Aggressive Inc ‡@	154.28	...	-0.24	...
UK Growth Acc ‡@	926.47	...	-3.33	...
UK Sml Cos Eqty Acc ‡@	1274.49	...	+4.24	...
UK Sml Cos Gwth ‡@	82.54	...	+0.04	...

INVESTEC FUND MGRS
Broker Support and Dealing: 020 7597 1900
OEIC Series i,ii,iii, & iv

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
American A Acc ‡@	735.76	...	-6.60	...
Asia ex Japan A Acc ‡@	691.02	...	-6.49	...
Capital Accumulator A Acc ‡@	231.48	...	-3.81	...
Cautious Managed A Acc ‡@	371.96	...	-0.91	1.91
Cautious Managed A Inc ‡@	231.49	...	-0.57	1.93
Diversified Growth A Acc ‡@	119.83	...	-0.94	0.51
Diversified Growth A Inc ‡@	126.27	...	-0.99	0.01
Diversified Income A Acc ‡@	320.50	...	-0.46	2.89
Diversified Income A Inc ‡@	66.57	...	-0.09	4.32
Emerging Mkts Blended Debt A Acc ‡@	114.93	...	+0.07	...
Emerging Mkts Blended Debt A Acc Gross ‡@	125.82	...	+0.20	...
Emerging Mkts Blended Debt A Inc ‡@	63.69	...	+0.04	...
Emerging Mkts Equity A Acc ‡@	145.59	...	-0.25	...
Emrg Mkts Local Curr Debt A Acc ‡@	187.74	...	+0.92	5.12
Emrg Mkts Local Curr Debt A Inc ‡@	70.18	...	+0.35	7.00
Emrg Mkts Local Curr Debt Gross I Acc ‡@	220.49	...	-0.05	5.42
Enhanced Natural Resources A Acc ‡@	134.24	...	-1.25	...
Global Bond A Acc ‡@	139.30	...	+4.03	0.82
Global Bond A Inc ‡@	109.33	...	+3.00	0.82
Global Bond I Gross Inc ‡@	1167.00	...	+29.78	1.25
Global Dynamic A Acc ‡@	193.61	...	+1.95	0.47
Global Energy A Acc ‡@	170.97	...	-1.14	...
Global Equity A Acc ‡@	234.08	...	-0.71	0.13
Global Franchise A Acc ‡@	317.42	...	-1.93	...
Global Free Enterprise A Acc ‡@	1290.47	...	-7.76	...
Global Gold A Acc ‡@	185.21	...	+0.44	0.92
Global Special Situations A Acc ‡@	343.64	...	-1.01	...
Global Special Situations A Inc ‡@	265.28	...	-0.78	0.21
Managed Growth A Acc ‡@	259.16	...	-1.40	...
Monthly High Income A Acc ‡@	243.45	...	+0.43	3.54
Monthly High Income A Inc ‡@	63.17	...	+0.01	5.01
Multi-Asset Protector A Acc ‡@	166.64	...	-0.25	0.92
Strategic Bond A Acc ‡@	244.54	...	+0.19	1.96
Strategic Bond A Inc ‡@	119.47	...	+0.09	3.32
Target Return A Acc ‡@	102.03	...	+0.44	0.82
Target Return A Inc ‡@	87.63	...	+0.01	0.87
UK Alpha A Acc ‡@	2692.44	...	-7.78	...
UK Blue Chip A Acc ‡@	770.11	...	+3.15	...
UK Smaller Companies A Acc ‡@	4327.77	...	-11.33	...
UK Smaller Companies A Inc ‡@	3881.72	...	-10.17	...
UK Special Situations A Acc ‡@	1473.56	...	-8.07	...
UK Special Situations A Inc ‡@	528.23	...	-2.89	...

For ISIS Asset Mgmt see F&C Fd Mgmt Ltd (OEICS)

JANUS HENDERSON INVESTORS
Investors Serv: 0800 832 832 Dlng: 0845 946 4646

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
All Stks Credit A Inc ‡@	111.40	...	-0.10	2.50
Asian Div Inc U Trst Inc ‡@	73.89	...	-0.41	5.88
Cautious Man Fd A Acc ‡@	283.30	...	-0.60	3.25
Cautious Man Fd A Inc ‡@	137.20	...	-0.30	3.31
China Opp Fund A Acc ‡@	1040.00	...	-9.00	0.30
Emg Mkts Opps Fd A Acc ‡@	190.20	...	-0.80	0.77
Erpn Grth Fund A Acc ‡@	301.20	...	-1.90	1.16
Erpn Sel Opps Fd A Acc ‡@	2323.00	...	-16.00	0.86
Fix Int Mnthly Inc Fd Acc ‡@	27.68	...	...	4.50
Global Equity Fund Acc ‡@	4335.00	...	-7.00	...
Global Equity Income A Inc ‡@	65.51	...	-0.14	3.34
Global Tech A Acc ‡@	3296.00	...	-31.00	...
Instl UK Idx Opps A Acc ‡@	116.44	...	-0.52	2.96
M-Asset Abs Ret A Acc ‡@	162.60	...	+0.20	0.82
M-Man Active Fd A Acc ‡@	256.50	...	-1.20	...
M-Man Inc Grth A Inc ‡@	143.40	...	...	3.27
M-Man Inc Grth Fd A Acc ‡@	187.80	...	+0.10	3.14
Sterling Bond U Trst Acc ‡@	201.60	...	-0.20	2.20
Sterling Bond U Trst Inc ‡@	54.35	...	-0.08	2.23
Strategic Bond A Inc ‡@	96.85	...	-0.09	3.18
UK Abs Ret Fd A Acc ‡@	172.90	...	...	0.65
UK Alpha Fund A Acc ‡@	132.90	...	-0.80	...
UK Irsh Sm Co Fd A Acc ‡@	742.50	...	-1.70	...
UK Property A Acc @	264.95	278.15	+0.01	...
UK Property A Inc @	105.80	111.07	...	...
US Growth Fund A Acc ‡@	1894.00	...	-5.00	...



JP MORGAN ASSET MGMT
OEIC

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Asia A Acc ‡@	259.00	...	+2.20	...
Emerging Mkts ‡@	261.50	...	+3.00	...
Eur Dyn (ex-UK) A Acc ‡@	270.30	...	+4.70	...
Euro Smllr Cos ‡@	864.00	...	+17.40	...
Europe A Acc ‡@	1734.00	...	+35.00	...
Gbl Hi Yld Bd A Acc ‡@	117.30	...	+1.10	5.30
Gbl Hi Yld Bd A Inc ‡@	30.89	...	+0.29	5.45
Gl ex-UK Bd A Acc ‡@	257.40	...	-0.70	...
Gl ex-UK Bd A Inc ‡@	196.80	...	-0.50	...
Glb Fins A Acc ‡@	1077.00	...	+1.00	...
Global A Acc ‡@	2049.00	...	+11.00	...
Japan A Acc ‡@	516.80	...	+6.20	...
Multi-Man Tst A Acc ‡@	1268.00	...	+16.00	...
Multi-Man Tst A Inc ‡@	1127.00	...	+15.00	...
Nat Resources ‡@	951.20	...	+17.30	...
New Europe A ‡@	155.70	...	+12.00	2.11
Portfolio ‡@	295.60	...	+0.40	0.98
Stg Corp Bd A Acc ‡@	85.59	...	-0.13	1.14
Stg Corp Bd A Inc ‡@	48.30	...	-0.08	1.14
UK Act 350 A Acc ‡@	199.00	...	-2.20	...
UK Dynamic Acc ‡@	206.70	...	+4.30	...
UK Dynamic Inc ‡@	148.20	...	+3.10	...
UK Equity A Acc ‡@	401.90	...	+0.60	...
UK Equity A Inc ‡@	46.44	...	+0.07	...
UK Eqy & Bd Inc Acc ‡@	167.10	...	-0.20	3.41
UK Eqy & Bd Inc Inc ‡@	90.29	...	-0.48	3.50
UK Higher Inc A Acc ‡@	1132.00	...	+7.00	...
UK Higher Inc A Inc ‡@	531.30	...	+2.00	...
UK Sm Cos A Acc ‡@	563.30	...	+7.00	0.34
UK Str Eq Inc A Acc ‡@	197.90	...	+3.50	...
UK Str Eq Inc A Inc ‡@	100.50	...	+1.77	...
US A Acc ‡@	1036.00	...	+25.00	...
US Sm Cos A Acc ‡@	976.20	...	+14.00	...

JUPITER UT MGRS LTD
020 7581 3020

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Absolute Return ‡@	31.70	...	+0.01	...
Distribution and Growth ‡@	99.30	...	+0.19	2.67
Emg Euro Opps ‡@	145.34	...	-31.23	...
Euro Special Sits ‡@	444.53	...	-3.80	...
European ‡@	2884.51	...	-18.58	...
Financial Opps ‡@	740.25	...	+1.30	1.13
Income Trust ‡@	501.39	...	-2.99	4.59
Merlin Bal (Acc) ‡@	235.23	...	-0.83	3.65
Merlin Gwth (Acc) ‡@	562.60	...	-2.33	...
Merlin Inc (Acc) ‡@	343.71	...	-1.13	3.12
Merlin Wwide (Inc) ‡@	399.58	...	-1.45	...
UK Growth ‡@	259.20	...	-0.62	0.89
UK Special Sits (Inc) ‡@	211.43	...	-1.29	2.24

LEGAL & GENERAL (UT MGRS) LTD
Enquiries: 0870 050 0955 Dealing: 0870 050 0956

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Equity Acc @	2616.00	2639.00	-8.00	...
Equity Dist @	893.80	902.00	-2.70	...
Euro Ind Acc ‡@	533.60	...	-3.50	...
Euro Ind Inc ‡@	341.20	...	-2.30	2.49
Fixed Int Acc ‡@	130.00	...	-0.20	2.62
Fixed Int Dist ‡@	59.68	...	-0.09	2.65
Glob Gwth Acc @	243.90	243.90	-1.30	1.15
Glob Health Acc ‡@	109.40	...	+0.30	0.83
Glob Tech Acc ‡@	107.70	...	+0.70	0.04
Gwth Tst Acc @	106.00	106.50	-1.00	...
High Inc Acc ‡@	125.40	...	...	5.57
Japan Ind Acc ‡@	75.18	...	-0.03	1.68
Pacific Ind Acc ‡@	196.30	...	-2.10	3.09
UK 100 Ind Acc @	180.90	180.90	+0.90	...
UK Active Opps Acc @	249.90	252.90	-0.10	...
UK Index Acc ‡@	353.30	...	-1.40	...
UK Index Dist ‡@	167.80	...	-0.70	...
US Ind Acc ‡@	877.30	...	+4.40	0.86
Worldwide Acc ‡@	340.20	...	-0.80	0.80

M & G SECURITIES
Enq: 0800 390 390 Dealing Line: 0800 328 3196
Authorised Inv Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Charifund Inc ‡	1437.23	...	-4.60	6.08

Sterling Class A Investment Funds 1

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Euro Smlr Cos Acc ‡	525.29	...	-3.39	...
Euro Smlr Cos Inc ‡	462.50	...	-3.00	...

Sterling Class A Investment Funds 2

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Extra Income Inc ‡	664.65	...	-1.65	5.90
Gilt & Fxd Int Inc ‡	71.80	...	-0.14	3.28
Gl Hi Yd Bd Inc ‡	38.83	...	-0.05	5.90
Index Linked Bd Inc ‡	109.11	...	-0.05	...
Index Trckr Inc ‡	76.24	...	-0.35	3.85
Short Dated Corp Bd Inc ‡	24.77	...	-0.01	3.48
UK Select A Inc ‡	2731.73	...	-6.48	2.79

Sterling Class A Investment Funds 3

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bd A Inc ‡	33.00	...	-0.05	4.34
Dividend Inc ‡	50.57	...	-0.19	6.47
Recovery A Inc ‡	105.94	...	-0.07	...
Sml Cos Inc ‡	319.11	...	-0.34	2.73

Sterling Class A Investment Funds 4

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Episode Allocation A Inc ‡@	138.27	...	-1.38	...

MARKS & SPENCER UNIT TRUST LTD
0808 005 5555

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
High Income	84.64	84.64	+0.26	4.60
High Income Acc	242.70	242.70	+0.70	4.47
UK 100 Comp Acc @	471.90	471.90	+4.40	2.98
UK 100 Cos @	226.70	226.70	+2.10	3.05
UK Select Pflo @	338.10	338.10	+3.00	3.29
UK Selection Port Acc @	711.50	711.50	+6.20	3.63
Worldwide Mgd Acc @	961.90	961.90	+4.00	1.54
Wwide Mgd @	556.90	556.90	+2.30	0.56

MORGAN STANLEY INVESTMENT MGMT LTD
Enquires: 0800 0961 962
The Morgan Stanley Funds (UK)
Class A Shares
Equity

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Dev Opp Fund F Acc ‡@	769.01	...	-12.76	...
Dev Opp Fund I Acc ‡@	764.18	...	-12.68	...
Glob Bal Inc F F Acc ‡@	934.43	...	-7.35	4.29
Glob Bal Inc F F Inc ‡@	849.58	...	-6.68	4.42
Glob Bal Inc F I Acc ‡@	932.65	...	-7.33	4.29
Glob Bal Inc F I Inc ‡@	847.96	...	-6.67	4.42
Glob Bal Sust F F Acc ‡@	937.39	...	-5.71	1.80
Glob Bal Sust F F Inc ‡@	910.74	...	-5.56	1.82
Glob Bal Sust F I Acc ‡@	935.82	...	-5.71	1.74
Glob Bal Sust F I Inc ‡@	910.45	...	-5.55	1.74
Glob Br Eq Inc Fund F Inc ‡@	1333.78	...	-4.22	4.02
Glob Br Eq Inc Fund I Acc ‡@	1878.40	...	-5.96	3.99
Glob Br Eq Inc Fund I Inc ‡@	1424.61	...	-4.52	4.10
Glob Br Fund I Acc (PH) ‡@	14128.54	...	-46.74	0.76
Glob Br Fund I Acc (PH) ‡@	1615.66	...	-16.20	0.74
Glob Br Fund I Inc (PH) ‡@	1536.22	...	-15.39	0.75
Glob Br Fund I Inc (PH) ‡@	3851.85	...	-12.74	0.77
Glob Ins Fund F Acc ‡@	552.07	...	-13.01	...
Glob Ins Fund F Inc ‡@	552.07	...	-13.01	...
Glob Ins Fund I Acc ‡@	548.79	...	-12.93	...
Glob Ins Fund I Inc ‡@	548.79	...	-12.94	...
Glob Sust Fund F Acc (PH) ‡@	1208.51	...	-17.53	0.52
Glob Sust Fund F Inc ‡@	1299.93	...	-9.86	...
Glob Sust Fund I Acc ‡@	1321.60	...	-10.03	...
Glob Sust Fund I Acc (PH) ‡@	1205.65	...	-17.53	0.38
Glob Sustain Fund F Acc ‡@	1329.78	...	-10.08	...
Stg Corp Bond F F Acc ‡@	120.50	...	-0.11	3.72
Stg Corp Bond F F Inc ‡@	92.94	...	-0.09	3.80
Stg Corp Bond F I Acc ‡@	2560.28	...	-2.46	3.46
Stg Corp Bond F I Inc ‡@	1310.91	...	-1.25	3.55
Sust Fixed Inc Opps F F Acc ‡@	933.58	...	-1.50	3.25
Sust Fixed Inc Opps F F Inc ‡@	879.12	...	-1.41	3.34
Sust Fixed Inc Opps F I Acc ‡@	928.42	...	-1.49	3.06
Sust Fixed Inc Opps F I Inc ‡@	878.67	...	-1.41	3.12
US Adv F F Acc ‡@	1485.85	...	-34.53	...
US Adv F F Acc (PH) ‡@	832.14	...	-26.29	...
US Adv F I Acc ‡@	1578.09	...	-36.68	...
US Adv F I Acc (PH) ‡@	869.14	...	-27.48	...

SANTANDER UNIT TST MGRS
08457 413002

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Bal Pfolio Inc ‡@	110.50	...	+0.40	...
Bal Port Gwth Acc ‡@	233.70	...	+0.80	1.78
Equity Inc Inc ‡@	199.10	...	+1.70	5.25
N&P UK Gwth Inc ‡@	182.80	...	+0.10	...
Stkmkt 100 Tkr @	269.10	269.10	-0.60	...
UK Growth Acc ‡@	473.80	...	+3.70	...
UK Growth Inc ‡@	249.50	...	+2.00	...

SCOTTISH MUTUAL INV MNGRS LTD
0141 248 6100

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
European Inc	1777.00	1873.48	+4.40	...
Far Eastern Inc	584.69	617.09	-0.73	1.42
Intl Growth Inc	380.56	400.59	+0.02	0.75
Japanese Inc	41.85	41.85	+0.43	0.56
Mutual European	2762.93	2908.99	-21.63	...
Mutual Far Eastern	872.75	921.11	-11.55	1.17
Mutual North Am	1983.00	2092.88	+6.23	0.24
Mutual UK Eq	1419.40	1428.80	-10.35	...
Nth American Inc	1227.65	1295.67	-7.28	...
UK Equity Inc	562.23	593.38	+1.31	...

SCOTTISH WIDOWS UNIT TRUST MGRS
0845 300 2244
Authorised Inv Funds (OEICs)
OEIC A Class
Managed Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Bal Port A Acc ‡@	237.60	...	+0.80	0.01
Caut Port A Acc ‡@	207.10	...	+0.30	...
Caut Port A Inc ‡@	152.00	...	+0.30	...
Opps Port A Acc ‡@	280.20	...	+1.30	...
Prog Port A Acc ‡@	266.60	...	+1.10	...

Overseas Growth Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Eur Sel Gth A Acc ‡@	3373.00	...	+22.00	2.14

Tracker and Specialist Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Trkr A Acc ‡@	398.40	...	+3.90	...
UK Trkr A Inc ‡@	197.30	...	+1.90	...

UK and Income Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bond A Acc ‡@	280.00	...	+1.40	2.82
Corp Bond A Inc ‡@	102.00	...	+0.50	2.86
Envir Invtr A Acc ‡@	374.90	...	+5.80	1.85
Hi Inc Bond A Ac ‡@	237.90	...	+0.20	...
Hi Inc Bond A Inc ‡@	68.30	...	+0.06	...
Hi Res A Acc ‡@	388.40	...	+3.70	3.98
Hi Res A Inc ‡@	117.40	...	+1.10	4.09
Safety Plus A Acc ‡@	40.49	...	...	...
Strat Inc A Acc ‡@	188.30	...	+0.70	3.80
Strat Inc A Inc ‡@	80.73	...	+0.29	3.88
UK Gwth A Acc ‡@	203.40	...	+2.20	...
UK Sel Gwth A Acc ‡@	2301.00	...	+25.00	...

OEIC B Class
Tracker and Specialist Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Trkr B Acc ‡@	440.10	...	+4.30	...
UK Trkr B Inc ‡@	196.20	...	+1.90	...

UK and Income Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bond B Acc ‡@	370.70	...	+0.90	...
Corp Bond B Inc ‡@	136.30	...	+0.30	...
UK Gwth B Acc ‡@	205.60	...	-0.30	...
UK Sel Gwth B Acc ‡@	2481.00	...	...	...

OEIC C Class
UK and Income Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Gth C Inc ‡@	131.40	...	+1.50	...
UK Sel Gwth C Acc ‡@	2598.00	...	...	...

STANDARD LIFE INVESTMENTS
0845 279 3003
Investment Funds (OEIC) - Retail Shares

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
AAA Inc CAT Acc ‡@	88.23	...	-0.06	1.43
AAA Inc CAT Inc ‡@	49.05	...	-0.03	1.44
AAA Income Acc ‡@	96.31	...	-0.05	1.84
Amer Eq Gth Acc ‡@	207.00	...	+0.50	...
Corp Bond Acc ‡@	154.50	...	-0.20	3.47
Corp Bond Inc ‡@	50.30	...	-0.06	3.55
Euro Eq Gth Acc ‡@	262.10	...	+3.90	...
Glb Advtg CAT Acc ‡@	149.40	...	-0.30	1.39
Glob Advtg Acc ‡@	197.30	...	-0.40	1.36
Glob Eq Uncstrd Acc ‡@	170.20	...	-0.70	...
Higher Inc Acc ‡@	148.40	...	-0.20	4.55
Higher Inc Inc ‡@	44.58	...	-0.03	4.69
Japan Eq Gth Acc ‡@	127.40	...	...	...
Managed Acc ‡@	365.80	...	-0.90	1.57
Select Inc Acc ‡@	91.51	...	...	...
Select Inc Inc ‡@	51.26	...	-0.26	...
UK Eq Gth Acc ‡@	372.70	...	+1.70	...
UK Eq Hi Alpha ‡@	230.00	...	+1.00	...
UK Eq Hi Inc Acc ‡@	267.00	...	-1.00	4.66
UK Eq Hi Inc Inc ‡@	70.12	...	-0.25	4.82
UK Ethical Acc ‡@	198.60	...	+0.10	2.31
UK Opps Acc ‡@	234.40	...	...	...
UK Opps Inc ‡@	211.70	...	...	...
UK Smlr Cos Acc ‡@	717.30	...	-0.10	0.69

SVS BROWN SHIPLEY FUNDS
Enquiries:0141 222 1151

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Balanced A Acc ‡@	135.80	...	-0.72	...
Balanced A Inc ‡@	119.86	...	-0.63	...
Cautious A Acc ‡@	110.92	...	-0.18	1.93
Cautious A Inc ‡@	94.16	...	-0.15	1.95
Dynamic A Acc ‡@	335.03	...	-2.41	...
Dynamic A Inc ‡@	299.38	...	-2.15	...
Growth A Acc ‡@	343.25	...	-2.19	...
Income A Acc ‡@	246.74	...	-0.95	1.86
Sterling Bond Acc ‡@	242.37	...	-0.28	...
Sterling Bond Inc ‡@	97.00	...	-0.11	...

THREADNEEDLE INVESTMENTS
Client Serv: 0800 0683000
Intermediary Serv: 0800 0684000
Institutional Shares (Class 2) (500000 GBP)

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Threadneedle UK Eq Opps Ins Inc ‡@	131.73	...	-0.08	1.51

Retail Shares (Class 1)

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Threadneedle HY Bd Rtl Inc ‡@	36.69	...	...	4.51
Threadneedle Mthly Etr Inc Rtl Inc ‡@	79.14	...	-0.14	3.68
Threadneedle SterlingCorpBd Ins Inc ‡@	52.31	...	-0.07	2.89
Threadneedle SterlingCorpBd Rtl Inc ‡@	52.24	...	-0.07	2.56
Threadneedle Stg Bd Ret Inc ‡@	41.40	...	-0.11	2.57
Threadneedle Strat Bd Ret ‡@	40.38	...	-0.04	4.01
Threadneedle UK Eq Inc Rtl Inc ‡@	98.96	...	-0.01	3.56
Threadneedle UK Growth & Inc Rtl Inc ‡@	93.02	...	+0.05	...
Threadneedle UK Insti Rtl ‡@	184.71	...	-0.37	1.90
Threadneedle UK Mthly Inc Rtl Inc ‡@	67.99	...	-0.23	4.36
Threadneedle UK Rtl Inc ‡@	134.78	...	-0.63	...
Threadneedle UK Smaller Coms Rtl Inc ‡@	339.43	...	+0.18	...

For Resolution see Ignis

TU FUND MANAGERS LIMITED

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
British	890.20	890.20	-5.00	0.96
European	210.70	219.40	+1.00	...

* Yield expressed as CAR (Compound Annual Return); † Ex dividend; ‡Middle price; . . . No significant data. # Periodic charge deducted from capital; @ Exit charge

British funds

Index-linked

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/–	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
351.56	301.39	Tr IL 4⅛% 30 *	341.66	– .59	1.89	0.45
258.74	206.76	Tr IL 2% 35 *	243.20	–1.29	1.00	0.71
108.06	82.01	Tr IL 0⅛% 36	91.85	– .65	...	0.78
123.56	94.08	Tr IL 1⅛% 37	103.58	– .74	1.14	0.86
107.37	78.25	Tr IL 0⅛% 39	87.38	– .64	...	1.01
115.89	84.60	Tr IL 0⅝% 40	93.84	– .72	...	1.03
106.93	75.20	Tr IL 0⅛% 41	84.73	– .76	...	1.07
117.13	82.66	Tr IL 0⅝% 42	91.56	– .83	0.68	1.12
105.33	72.26	Tr IL 0⅛% 44	80.29	– .83	...	1.21
104.62	70.25	Tr IL 0⅛% 46	77.70	– .88	...	1.27
120.76	80.78	Tr IL 0¾% 47	89.02	–1.00	0.86	1.28
108.80	90.61	Tr IL 0⅛% 31	98.33	– .33	...	0.34
120.17	99.08	Tr IL 1¼% 32	107.30	– .42	1.17	0.44
114.95	92.56	Tr IL 0¾% 34	101.40	– .51	...	0.61
105.21	66.79	Tr IL 0⅛% 48	75.23	– .93	...	1.29
114.09	60.50	Tr IL 0⅛% 56	70.05	–1.26	...	1.23
117.10	60.14	Tr IL 0⅛% 58	69.04	–1.28	...	1.23
132.13	64.93	Tr IL 0⅜% 62	74.96	–1.49	...	1.19
126.92	55.87	Tr IL 0⅛% 65	66.90	–1.58	...	1.11
129.79	54.65	Tr IL 0⅛% 68	66.52	–1.69	...	1.07
148.46	55.40	Tr IL 0⅛% 73	69.69	–2.11	...	0.88
105.10	95.63	Tr IL 0⅛% 26	98.50	+ .08	...	0.73
111.65	99.63	Tr IL 1¼% 27	103.48	+ .05	1.32	0.41
106.19	93.33	Tr IL 0⅛% 28	98.81	+ .03	...	0.37
106.30	92.36	Tr IL 0⅛% 29	98.39	– .06	...	0.42
105.03	97.72	Tr IL 0⅛% 24	98.96	+ .04	...	2.24
380.26	359.04	Tr IL 2½% 24 *	378.66	+ .27	1.43	2.66
116.15	72.64	Tr IL 0½% 50	82.24	–1.09	...	1.29
111.08	65.69	Tr IL 0¼% 52	75.49	–1.15	...	1.28
149.39	88.77	Tr IL 1¼% 55	99.85	–1.65	1.38	1.26

Longs (Over 15 years)

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/–	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
112.08	91.30	Tr 4¼% 40	95.53	– .55	...	4.63
102.68	79.61	Tr 3½% 45	83.86	– .51	...	4.71
106.34	63.35	Tr 0⅝% 51	73.03	–1.10	...	1.29
71.44	54.72	Tr 1¼% 41	59.04	– .42	...	4.61
98.61	76.78	Tr 3¼% 44	81.21	– .49	...	4.69
117.12	93.79	Tr 4½% 42	98.02	– .59	4.59	4.66
63.87	44.40	Tr 1¼% 51	47.21	– .42	...	4.65
123.23	90.07	Tr 4¼% 55	93.52	– .66	4.54	4.64
73.50	49.39	Tr 1¾% 57	51.90	– .41	...	4.55
122.75	86.40	Tr 4% 60	89.77	– .56	...	4.58
46.24	26.21	Tr 0½% 61	28.74	– .28	...	4.34
91.47	59.83	Tr 2½% 65	62.51	– .44	...	4.50
116.13	77.61	Tr 3½% 68	80.76	– .53	...	4.50
70.95	42.99	Tr 1⅝% 71	45.34	– .38	...	4.34
57.59	32.96	Tr 1⅛% 73	35.41	– .32	...	4.25
103.74	81.74	Tr 3¾% 53	84.97	– .59	...	4.69
115.49	89.35	Tr 4¼% 46	93.49	– .55	4.55	4.71
61.15	43.93	Tr 0⅞% 46	47.69	– .38	...	4.67
70.13	51.06	Tr 1½% 47	54.55	– .42	...	4.69
74.08	53.78	Tr 1¾% 49	56.87	– .44	...	4.67
117.52	89.75	Tr 4¼% 49	93.15	– .60	4.56	4.71
53.35	35.82	Tr 0⅝% 50	38.55	– .36	...	4.63
110.80	82.24	Tr 3¾% 52	85.37	– .60	...	4.68
67.79	46.78	Tr 1½% 53	49.54	– .44	...	4.64
70.42	48.25	Tr 1⅝% 54	50.85	– .44	...	4.62
117.50	98.29	Tr 4¾% 38	102.27	– .56	4.64	4.54
72.59	58.05	Tr 1⅛% 39	62.17	– .40	...	4.58
111.29	92.08	Tr 4¼% 39	96.13	– .53	4.42	4.59

Mediums (5-15 years)

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/–	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
93.52	84.72	Tr 1⅝% 28	88.54	– .09	...	4.15
116.13	104.85	Tr 6% 28	108.29	– .11	5.54	4.21
86.40	77.61	Tr 0½% 29	82.16	– .13	...	4.26
87.71	78.21	Tr 0⅞% 29	82.63	– .15	...	4.13
103.82	95.72	Tr 4 ⅛% 27	98.77	– .06	...	4.52
82.38	72.39	Tr 0⅜% 30	76.94	– .22	...	4.17
112.72	100.56	Tr 4¾% 30	103.63	– .27	4.58	4.16
79.47	69.25	Tr 0¼% 31	73.82	– .26	...	4.20
93.30	85.65	Tr 1¼% 27	89.53	– .07	...	4.24
106.12	96.63	Tr 4¼% 27	99.89	– .09	4.25	4.28
87.24	79.15	Tr 0⅛% 28	83.88	– .07	...	4.22
83.95	73.06	Tr 1% 32	77.42	– .30	...	4.24
113.35	97.71	Tr 4½% 34	101.28	– .45	4.44	4.35
73.11	61.24	Tr 0⅝% 35	65.47	– .41	...	4.39
110.66	94.67	Tr 4¼% 36	98.44	– .55	4.32	4.41
81.78	67.54	Tr 1¾% 37	71.53	– .42	...	4.52
104.43	...	Tr 3¾% 38	91.43	– .52	...	4.57
110.34	97.27	Tr 4¼% 32	100.44	– .37	4.23	4.19
101.14	88.88	Tr 4 ⅛% 27	92.12	– .37	...	4.28
79.92	68.57	Tr 0⅞% 33	72.80	– .32	...	4.29
91.05	84.28	Tr 0⅜% 26	88.61	– .02	...	4.37
95.52	89.28	Tr 1½% 26	92.56	– .01	...	4.32

Shorts (under 5 years)

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/–	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
98.29	94.34	Tr 0⅛% 24	98.29	+ .03	...	4.98
97.82	92.80	Tr 2% 25	95.13	+ .04	...	4.63
100.88	95.02	Tr 3½% 25	97.40	+ .03	...	4.83
92.38	86.33	Tr 0⅛% 26	90.65	– .01	...	4.35
94.97	90.15	Tr 0⅝% 25	93.58	+ .04	...	4.57
104.29	99.24	Tr 5% 25	100.38	+ .06	4.98	4.73
97.70	94.79	Tr 1% 24	97.70	+ .03	...	5.06
94.34	90.04	Tr 0¼% 25	94.18	+ .01	...	4.73
99.43	96.82	Tr 2¾% 24	97.94	+ .06	...	4.99

* maturities having an eight-month indexation lag.

This is a paid for information service. For further details on a particular fund, readers should contact their fund manager.

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Business Equity prices

Dividend yields Please note that the information in the dividend yields column has been suspended due to technical problems at Morningstar, the provider.
12-month high and low High/low prices for UK equities are based on closing prices. Investment trust high and low prices are based on intra-day figures.

Automobiles & parts

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
395¾	89½	Aston Martin Lag	285	− 19½	...	-1.7

Banking & finance

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
236¾	133	Abrdn‡	155½	− 4	...	3.3
9¾	6	Acuity RM♦	6	− ¼	...	...
2490	1881½	Admiral‡	2444	+ 29	...	12.4
46¼	14½	ADVFN♦	14½	...	...	2.5
390	255½	AJ Bell	296¾	− 1	...	27.8
27847½	21609¼	Aon Corpn	27521	− 314¼	...	67.1
1075	645	Arbuthnot Bkg♦	950	− 5	...	21.0
12½	7	Argo Group♦	7	...	...	3.2
286½	180¾	Ashmore	194½	+ ½	...	6.6
1349¾	1165½	Aus New Z	1308¾	− 25½	...	10.2
462¾	369¾	Aviva‡	400½	− 1¾	...	52.6
341½	211¾	Banco Santander	301½	− 10	...	7.1
3695	1944	Bank of Georgia	3695	+ 15	...	11.4
189½	133¾	**Barclays**	156¾	− 2¾	...	3.8
¼	...	Blue Star Capital♦	...	...	...	2.2
418	283	BP Marsh&Ptnrs♦	385	...	...	10.6
15¼	6¾	Braveheart Inv♦	11¼	...	...	0.2
515	513	Brewin Dolphin	515	+ 1	...	28.1
256	166¾	Bridgepoint‡	194½	− 2½	...	12.1
52½	24½	Cenkos Secs♦	29	...	...	5.9
312½	262½	Chesnara	275	+ 6	...	15.2
52¾	9	City of Lon Gp♦	10	+ 1	...	-0.6
470	343½	City Lon Inv Gp	400	− 1	...	9.3
1131	796½	Close Bros	869	+ 2½	...	6.4
268	100¾	CMC Markets	107¾	...	...	3.3
1027¾	616½	Commerzbk	867½	+ 4¼	...	44.4
1061¾	653¾	Deutsche Bk	875½	− 5	...	10.2
235¾	133¾	Direct Line Ins	181¼	+ 4¾	...	7.5
78¾	45¼	EFG-Hermes Hldg	49½	− 3¼	...	3.1
195	122½	EPE Special Opps♦	170	...	...	9.5
1219½	843¼	FBD‡	1080½	...	...	4.8
70	65	Fiske♦	65	...	...	11.5
75	53½	Frenkel Topping♦	58	...	...	33.7
1016	602	Georgia Capital	1012	− 6	...	2.7
1067½	670	Gresham House♦	1065	...	...	42.7
506	394	H&T Group♦	425	+ 5	...	13.6
55½	33	Hansard Global	42¾	...	...	14.5
949½	736	**Hargreaves Lansdown**811½		− 4¾	...	14.4
175	117½	Helios Under♦	117½	...	...	...
654¾	442¾	**HSBC**‡	636	+ 2¾	...	13.9
836½	632½	IG Group‡	640½	− 30½	...	6.5
883	488½	Impax♦	488½	− 8	...	16.1
1511½	953¾	Intermed Capital	1334½	− 26½	...	7.6
129½	64½	IPF‡	129½	+ 2½	...	7.2
164½	121½	International Public P'ship‡126¼		− 1¾	...	16.3
546½	351½	Investec	472	+ 8¼	...	11.8
340	253	Investment Co	335	...	...	12.0
75½	52	IP Group	60½	+ ¾	...	2.2
195	105	Jarvis Securities♦	120	+ 5	...	8.6
151	83¾	Jupiter Fund Mgmt	96½	+ ½	...	3.5
95¼	55½	Just Group‡	72¼	− ¾	...	...
664	461¾	Lancashire Holdings	618½	− 1½	...	...
265¼	204	**Legal & Gen**‡	229	− 1¾	...	7.0
...	...	Liberty Group	502½	− 2¾	...	...
1290	587½	Liontrust	607½	− 7½	...	7.6
54	31	Livermore Invs♦	36½	...	...	2.3
53¾	39	**Lloyds Banking Gp**	44¾	− ⅝	...	6.1
32½	19½	LMS Capital	21½	...	...	9.3
8774	7104	**Lond Stk Ex Gp**	8340	− 36	...	85.2
219¼	159¾	**M&G**	201¼	− 1¾	...	62.9
286¾	202	Man‡	214½	− 5¼	...	8.6
29	8¼	Manx Fin♦	19¼	− 2¾	...	9.7
2¾	1	Marechale Cap♦	1¼	...	...	0.8
16017½	12034½	Marsh McLn	15935½	− 135¼	...	33.2
670	530	Mattioli Woods♦‡	600	− 20	...	...
17¾	7½	Metal Tiger♦	9	+ ¾	...	3.5
153½	65	Metro Bank	65	− 3	...	-0.4
1700½	1306¾	Nat Aust Bk	1502	− 33¾	...	14.9
309½	212¾	**NatWest**	239¾	− 1⅝	...	9.4
341	170¾	Numis♦	336	+ 1	...	6.8
568½	321½	Onesavings Bank	328¾	− ½	...	4.3
611	377½	PayPoint‡	547	+ 8	...	17.1
3½	¼	PCF Group♦	⅜	+ ⅛	...	-0.4
647	504¾	**Phoenix**	536	− 2½	...	-6.2
1371½	797½	**Prudential**‡	909½	− 14½	...	14.7
2¼	⅞	Quantum Blockchain♦	1	...	...	-6.0
107¼	71¾	Quilter	88½	− 1⅝	...	63.2
87¾	44	Randall & Quilter♦	48⅞	...	...	72.9
2220	1570	Rathbone Grp‡	1750	+ 28	...	13.5
¾	½	RiverFort Global Opps♦	½	...	...	1.7
2050	1395	Rockwood Strategic	1715	...	...	2.5
2570	1905	S & U	2265	− 15	...	10.6
1⅞	⅜	Sancus Lending Grp♦	⅜	...	...	-0.2
50	40	Schroder REIT	42	+ 1½	...	4.4
506¾	358¾	**Schroders**‡	410¾	− 3	...	1.8
1304½	834¾	**St James Place**‡	834¾	− 12½	...	15.9
790¾	519½	**Stand Chart**‡	753¾	+ 4	...	16.8
8½	5½	Starvest♦	5½	...	...	-0.9
60	24½	STM Group♦	57½	...	...	22.1
4152½	3218¾	Sun Life Can	4041	− 52¾	...	10.3
9	5¼	Tavistock Inv♦	5¼	...	...	0.8
2995	1634	TBC Bank Group‡	2995	+ 10	...	8.7
12¼	3½	Tern♦	4½	+ ⅛	...	3.3
57	48	Thames Ventures VCT	48	...	...	6.4
29¼	15¼	Time Finance♦	28⅞	...	...	17.3
243¾	103	Vanquis‡	122¾	+ ½	...	2.2
1245	900	Volvere♦	1110	...	...	...
34½	5½	WH Ireland♦	5½	− 1½	...	3.0
30	23	Walker Crips Grp‡	23	...	...	65.7
3912½	2922¾	Wells Fargo	3491	+ 2	...	9.5
1272½	1040¼	Westpac	1096¾	− 28½	...	14.8
31	21½	Worsley Investors Ltd	27½	− ½	...	85.9
41183½	35031¼	Zurich Fincl	38787	+ 45	...	15.1

Investment companies

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	Dis(-) or Pm
2107	1044½	**3i Group**	2062	+ 8	...	12.5
346	276¾	3i Infrastructure	312½	+ 2	...	-7.5
1428	1066	Aberforth Smlr	1252	+ 16	...	-14.1
99	78	abrdnDivInc&Grwth	84¾	− ⅛	...	-26.3
1070¼	884	Alliance	1044	− 10	...	-5.2
457	338¼	Asia Dragon Tr	349	− 6	...	-15.8
220	171½	Athelney Trust	195	...	...	-9.0
206½	171½	AVI Global Trust	201½	− ½	...	-10.6
330	206¼	Baillie Gifford Ch Gr	210	− 4½	...	-11.9
102½	73½	BaillieGifford Eu Gr	84¾	− 1¼	...	-13.1
829	692	Baillie Gifford JpnTr	721	− 9	...	-8.3
163¾	125¾	Baillie Gifford SN	129½	− 2½	...	-12.0
180½	139½	Baillie Gifford UK Gr	158⅞	− 2¾	...	-13.3
98	64	Bal Comm Prop	70¼	+ 1¼	...	-41.0
107	90¾	Bankers Inv Trst	97¾	− ¾	...	-13.2
5232	334	BH Macro	356½	+ 3	...	-11.6
1003¼	745½	Biotech Growth	768	− 12	...	-7.1
149½	108	BlckRck Com Inc	117¾	− 1¼	...	-9.1
148	123	BlckRck Fro Inv	141½	− 3	...	-7.6
566	396	BlckRck Grt Euro	514	− 3	...	-4.9
206	164	BlckRck Inc & Gwth	184½	− ½	...	-11.9
449	333½	BlckRck Latin Am	401	− 11	...	-13.3
1450	1162	BlckRck Smlr	1274	+ 12	...	-14.0
215	178	BlckRck Sustain Amer	185½	...	...	-7.4
670	477¾	BlckRck Throgmorton	570	− 2	...	-6.6
774	538	BlckRck Wld Min	584	− 22	...	-1.3
1321¾	1115	Brown Adv US sm	1175	− 17½	...	-14.5
1115	888	Brunner	1065	− 5	...	-13.1
4065	3015	Caledonia Inv	3490	+ 10	...	-31.4
432	366½	City of Lon IT	404½	+ ½	...	0.3
121	60	Crystal Amber Fd♦	65	...	...	-31.9
534	384	CT Priv Eq Ord	489	− 7	...	-27.0
96	72	CT Property	73½	− 1¼	...	-14.5
317	256	CT UK Cap&Inc	298	− 2	...	-2.5
93	77	CT UK HIT B	81	...	...	-8.0
89	71	CT UK HIT	81	...	...	-6.9
356	294	CT UK HIT UNIT	319	...	...	-9.5
590	476	Dunedin Entp	552½	...	...	-11.2
690	537	Edinburgh IT	671	− 4	...	-8.9
193	135½	Edin Wwide	143¼	− 2¾	...	-15.5
376	273¾	EP Global Opp	315	+ 3	...	-15.0
97¾	74½	European Assets	84¾	− 1	...	-7.8
818	608	European Opp Trust	800	− 4	...	-11.1
992	825½	**F&C Invest Tr**	885	− 9	...	-8.5
536	413½	Fidlty Asian Val	514	− 6	...	-6.3
299½	181¾	Fidelity China Sp	209	− 1	...	-10.3
649½	552½	FdltyEmrgMkt	600½	− 6	...	-12.7
352	258½	Fidelity European Trust342½		− 4½	...	-5.5
187	154	Fidlty Jap Tru	166	− 1½	...	-10.5
293½	232	Fidlty Spec Val	277½	+ ½	...	-7.9
923	760½	Fins Gwth & Inc	867	− 9	...	-4.6
106½	68½	GCP Infrastructure	71¼	+ ⅜	...	-35.3
39	24	Gldn Prosp Prc Mtl	26	...	...	-22.9
168½	130¾	Greencoat UK Wind	142	− ½	...	-13.9
201¼	161	Hansa Investment	186½	− 2½	...	-40.3
193¾	160	Hansa Inv Co 'A'	182	...	...	-42.7
2450	1900	Hbrvest Glbl Pt Eq	2395	+ 25	...	-38.6
166½	120½	Hend Euro Foc	159½	− ½	...	-11.7
181	137½	Hend High Inc	165	− 1	...	-12.1
907	674½	Hend Smlr	727	+ 5	...	-13.2
1966	1540	Herald	1742	− 4	...	-14.3
420	316	HgCapital Trust	404½	− 5½	...	-13.4
178½	119½	HICL Infra	127½	− 1¾	...	-21.6
500	216	Highbridge Tactical	425	...	...	61.1
1223½	928	ICG Ent Tr	1204	+ 6	...	-35.9
462½	373	Impax Env Mkts	374½	− 6½	...	-6.3
374	280	Invesco Asia Tr	317	− 3	...	-10.2
173	141	Invesco Bond Inc	165	+ ½	...	1.6
147	111	IPST Bal	117	− ½	...	-22.7
258½	200	IPST Glb Eq	242	+ 1	...	-14.3
101	88	IPST Managed	94½	...	...	-14.2
177	141	IPST UK Eq	154½	− 1¼	...	-15.4
478	373½	IP UKSmallerCos	417	...	...	-9.5
830	657½	JPM American	805	− 3	...	-0.1
402½	294½	JPM Asia Gro & Inc	342	− 4	...	-8.5
419	237½	JPM China	239	− 5	...	-10.2
722	624	JPM Claverhs	670	− 4	...	-5.4
804	514	JPMorgan Emerg E & ME & Africa648		− 1¾	...	206.1
120½	91	JPM Em Mkts	104¾	− 1¾	...	-7.2
449	339	JPM Euro disc	374½	− 6½	...	-13.5
142½	108	JPM GEMI	125	− 2	...	-9.6
484	394	JPM GG&I	471	− 3½	...	2.1
902	764	JPM Indian	870	− 4	...	-17.6
347	297	JPM Jap Sml Co	305	− 8	...	-11.9
521	416	JPM Japan	475	− 9	...	-6.9
974¾	735	JPM Mid Cap	892	− 13	...	-13.0
98	85½	JPM Multi-asset G&I	93	− ¼	...	-2.2
303	230	JPM Smllr Co	268	...	...	-13.6
228½	180½	Keystone Positive Change Inv plc206		− 5	...	-11.9
871	649	Law Debenture	820	...	...	1.4
135	99	Lowland	115½	+ 1½	...	-14.8
223	156¾	Majedie	187	− 1¾	...	-23.5
358	272¾	M Currie Port	315	− 6	...	-0.9
104½	84	Marwyn Val In	85	− 3	...	-47.7
222	158¾	Mercantile IT	198½	− ½	...	-14.4
606	480	Merchants	551	+ 2	...	...
732	639¾	Mid Wynd	710	− 7	...	-1.5
1056	906	Monks Inv Tst	942	− 11	...	-13.1
151½	104¾	Montanaro Eur Sml	123½	...	...	-11.7
886	715	Murray Income Trust	836	− 3	...	-8.8
275¾	225½	Murray Int	241½	− 1½	...	-6.9
80½	70½	Nb Global Floating	72½	...	...	-10.1
384	326	Pacific Assets	368	− 7	...	-5.4
297	229½	Pantheon Int	296	+ 1	...	-34.8
3115	2565	**Pershing Sq**	2970	− 28	...	-36.8
487½	458¾	Personal Assets	468½	...	...	-0.9
2340	1697½	Polar Cap Tech	2205	− 10	...	-12.8
192	114½	Prem Glb & Inf	120	...	...	-11.4
148½	103½	Renewables Inf	109	− ⅜	...	-17.1
2400	1784	RIT Cap Ptnr	1952	+ 2	...	-18.7
736	510	Riverstone	610	...	...	-52.7
457	366½	Schroder TotRt	405	− 4	...	-4.9
549¾	446	Schrd Asia Pac	489½	− 3½	...	-10.5
324	254½	Schrod Inc Gwth	274	− 6	...	-8.3
246	190	Schrod Jap Gwth	242	− 4	...	-8.0
626	454	Schrod UKMid	552	+ 6	...	-13.0
18⅞	11½	Schroder UK PP Tr	14½	...	...	-42.2
543	434	Scot American	507	− 4	...	1.5
833¾	604¾	**Scot Mtge**	667	− 13	...	-17.4
236	205	Secs Tst Scot	220	− 3	...	-0.7
94¾	71	Sequoia Eco	82¾	...	...	-11.3
249½	195¾	Temple Bar	240	− ½	...	-5.9
166	130	Tplton Emg Mkt	147¾	− 1½	...	-14.0
162½	122	The Glbl Smaller	144¾	+ ½	...	-12.9
¼	...	Tiger Royal and Inv♦	⅛	...	...	66.6
350½	254	TR Property	293½	+ ½	...	-7.7
74	64¾	Troy Inc&Gth	71⅞	...	...	-1.6
200	122	Utilico Ord	131	...	...	-35.3
234	197½	Utilico Emerging Mkt	223	− 3	...	-15.2
688	500	Vietnam Ent Inv	605	− 4	...	-19.6
237	199½	Witan	229	− 1	...	-7.9
345	296	Ww Health	310	...	...	-9.1



Construction & property

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
183½	135	Alumasc♦	162½	...	...	8.2
11¼	8¾	Aseana Props	8⅞	− ⅜	...	-4.4
61	43½	Assura‡	45¼	− ⅛	...	9.0
2¾	1¾	Aukett Swanke♦	1¾	...	...	-2.6
393¾	294½	Balfour Beatty	335	+ 1¾	...	15.8
506¾	323¾	**Barratt Devs**	468¾	+ 3⅝	...	7.3
2500	1586½	Bellway	2264	− 4	...	6.8
4504	3165	**Berkeley**	4217	+ 22	...	10.9
1290	987	Big Yellow Group	1012	− 9	...	6.6
455	181½	Billington Hldgs♦	385	− 10	...	31.3
277	198	Boot (Henry)	202	+ 2	...	10.8
471¾	297¼	Br Land	322¼	+ 1¾	...	44.1
167½	120	Caledonian Tst♦	160	...	...	31.9
61¾	43¼	Cap & Regnl‡	57½	+ ½	...	-0.5
2550	2350	Cardiff Prop	2450	...	...	26.6
24	1¾	Carecapital♦‡	1⅞	...	...	-0.2
155	106	Clarke T‡	139¼	+ ¾	...	10.0
238	191½	Countryside Partner	229¾	+ 14	...	16.7
28¾	6	Craven House♦	11¾	− 1⅝	...	-0.2
4674	2858½	**CRH**	4386	− 7	...	18.2
2726	1812	Derwent London‡	1933	+ 20	...	8.6
4¾	3¼	Dolphin Capital♦	4¾	...	...	-3.3
28	17½	First Prop♦	17½	...	...	...
45½	34½	Fletcher King♦	40½	+ 1	...	...
42	27¼	Foxtons Group	37¼	− ⅝	...	...
245	145	Galliford Try	245	+ 25½	...	54.4
349	252½	Genuit Group‡	327	+ 4½	...	19.8
490	335	Gleeson (MJ)	417	+ 2	...	6.5
988¾	630½	Grafton‡	906½	− 12	...	10.5
271¾	205¾	Grainger	245	+ 4	...	15.2
603½	382¾	Great Portland	433	+ 8½	...	-5.4
30½	17¼	Hammerson‡	24⅞	− ⅛	...	-2.6
127½	101	Harworth Gp‡	107	+ ½	...	3.7
600	400	Heath (Samuel)♦‡	400	...	...	8.2
389	219	Helical PLC	226½	+ 4½	...	5.4
1025	750	Highcroft Invs‡	835	− 15	...	3.6
189¾	135¾	Ibstock	144½	+ ⅝	...	18.7
224	176	James Halstead♦	211	− 4	...	22.4
856	591	Keller	785	+ 5	...	9.1
6541¾	3861¾	Kingspan Group	6214½	− 221¾	...	24.4
743½	485¼	**Land Sec**‡	611¼	+ 4¾	...	...
89½	58	Life Science Reit	71¾	...	...	...
22	10½	Lon & Assoc	10¾	...	...	-1.4
207	161¾	Londonmetric Property‡176½		− ½	...	3.7
62	45¼	Macau Prop Op	49½	...	...	-6.4
366½	225¾	Marshalls	278	+ 5½	...	10.1
101	74	Michelmersh♦	89½	+ ½	...	14.2
2100	1392	Morgan Sindall	2100	+ 5	...	10.2
12500	10550	Mountview	10650	+ 150	...	13.2
94½	68¼	NewRiver REIT	86¾	+ ½	...	-3.0
260	195	Palace Capital‡	240	− 3	...	11.4
335	255	Panther Securities♦	275	+ 20	...	2.4
1531	968½	Persimmon	1092	− 8	...	4.4
3½	1¼	Pires Investments♦	1¼	...	...	-2.9
45	30	Plaza Cent	30	...	...	...
128⅞	88½	Primary Health Properties98		− ⅛	...	10.0
35¼	27½	Real Estate Invs♦	27½	...	...	3.6
545	372½	Redrow‡	504	− 8	...	6.2
1074	782½	Safestore	782½	− 2½	...	4.4
1055	763½	Savills‡	906½	− 3½	...	9.0
6¼	5⅜	Secure Property♦	6	+ ⅝	...	15.8
920¾	694	**Segro**‡	746¾	− 4¾	...	2.2
44¾	27¾	SIG	37¾	+ 1	...	...
63	37¾	SigmaRoc♦	56½	− ⅛	...	...
91¾	66½	Sirius Real Estate	90	+ ¾	...	7.0
173½	160½	Smart (J)	166	...	...	4.5
50	24½	Steppe Cement♦	24½	...	...	5.6
128¼	85	**Taylor Wimpey**	121½	− ⅛	...	8.0
170½	117	Town Centre	122½	+ 2	...	4.8
1082½	738	Travis Perkins	840	...	...	8.1
168¼	123½	Tritax Big Box Reit	145¾	+ 1⅛	...	2.6
78	50¾	Tritax Eurobox	54	...	...	...
318	184½	Tyman	296	− 1	...	11.7
1053	791½	**Unite**‡	936	− 1½	...	10.9
946	519½	Vistry Group	929½	− 11	...	8.1
142¾	77½	Warehouse REIT‡	83¼	+ ½	...	1.9
537	343¾	Workspace Grp	512½	+ 4½	...	-7.6
700	622½	Wynnstay Props♦	690	...	...	5.0

Consumer goods

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
5	1	Agriterra♦	1¼	...	...	-0.1
39½	25½	Airea♦	28½	− ½	...	10.5
880	652	Anglo-Eastern‡	736	− 12	...	6.7
292½	147½	Animalcare♦	180	...	...	...
2114	1237	**AB Foods**	2090	+ 4	...	34.5
121	86	Bakkavor Group‡	94	− 2	...	9.7
561	432	Barr (AG)	502	+ 6	...	17.8
3¾	⅜	Bidstack Group♦	⅜	...	...	-0.5
39	24½	Brand Architekts♦	28	...	...	-1.2
3481½	2484½	**Brit Amer Tob**	2725½	− 9½	...	9.2
936	707½	Britvic	884½	− 8	...	20.0
2641	1636	**Burberry**	2002	− 39	...	17.2
183½	123¾	C&C Grp	140	+ 2⅜	...	-8.3
5½	1	Capital Metals♦	1¼	...	...	-0.3
149¾	92	Carr's Grp‡	120	...	...	14.8
512	255	Character Grp♦	265	...	...	4.7
1640	1070	Churchill China♦‡	1300	− 5	...	...
2565	1840	**Coca Cola HBC**	2250	− 48	...	17.9
840	610	Colefax♦‡	760	...	...	13.4
3642	2586	Cranswick	3642	+ 6	...	19.2
329	164	Devro	329	...	...	17.8
3857½	3139½	**Diageo**‡	3139½	− 60	...	24.1
1	⅜	Distil♦	½	...	...	12.5
908	670	Evans (M.P.)♦	744	+ 6	...	6.3
110	77	Finsbury Food♦	110	...	...	13.1
11700	5690	Games Workshop	10870	+ 70	...	29.9
1376¾	903½	Glanbia‡	1376¾	...	...	33.9
92¼	60¼	Greencore	77	− ¼	...	15.4
348	214	Headlam	232	− 1	...	10.0
791	500	Hilton Food	791	+ 3	...	16.5
29	16	Hornby♦	16½	...	...	78.5
2185	1695	**Imperial Brands**‡1756		− 6½	...	5.8
1½	1	J Lewis Hford♦	1¼	+ ¼	...	7.9
8518¾	6995¾	Kerry Gp	7033¾	− 56¾	...	19.4
44⅞	19	McBride	39⅜	− 1¼	...	-7.0
295	200	Mulberry Group♦	200	...	...	8.2
1150	958	Nichols♦	1030	− 12½	...	...
223	143	Norcros	145	+ 1	...	4.5
374¼	271	Origin Ents♦	273¼	− 2½	...	8.6
11½	...	Pittards♦‡	5⅞	+ 1	...	2.5
512½	266	Portmeirion♦	266	− 9	...	11.3
⅞	½	Provexis♦	⅝	...	...	0.3
221	153¾	PZ Cussons	161	− 1¾	...	18.5
125	49½	REA	49½	− 2¾	...	-3.9
2	⅜	Real Gd Fd♦	1⅛	...	...	0.1
320	162½	Tandem♦	162½	...	...	2.3
724	496	Treatt	507	− 11	...	20.3
3¼	1¾	Ukrproduct Gp♦	2¼	− ⅛	...	-1.5
5051	4451	Unilever (NV)	...	...	...	...
4443½	3838	**Unilever**	4135	+ 19½	...	21.2
722	400	Victoria♦	570	− 61	...	...

Engineering

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
...	...	Ass Br Eng‡	15	...	...	-3.5
1200	624	Avon Rubber	633	− 5	...	...
395	268½	Babcock	384½	+ 2¼	...	-2.3
1052	714	**BAE**	1029½	− 15½	...	18.8
2150	1200	Braime A N/V♦	1475	...	...	16.6
1850	1650	Braime Group♦	1850	+ 50	...	20.8
580	470	Caffyns	550	+ 35	...	7.9
4½	1¼	Cap XX Ld♦	1½	...	...	-3.2
419	279	Castings	339	+ 6	...	16.3
4⅝	2⅜	Chamberlin♦	2⅜	...	...	-0.2
34	14	Checkit♦	29	...	...	-3.5
540	391	Cohort♦‡	510	− 6	...	45.3
400	249	Crestchic Plc♦	399	...	...	...
1335	815	Dewhurst♦	855	...	...	9.8
325	182½	Dialight	182½	− 1½	...	...
1254	813¼	Electrolux 'B'	820¾	− 23¾	...	6.2
182½	71	Feedback♦	78½	...	...	...
664	426	Gooch Hsego♦	522	− 10	...	38.6
5250	2625	Goodwin‡	5250	− 10	...	29.0
2498	1974	**Halma**	2025	− 51	...	29.3
1810	893	Hill & Smith	1784	+ 6	...	41.9
89	61	Holders Tech♦‡	65	...	...	3.9
2¼	¾	Image Scan♦	1¼	...	...	10.5
1680	1089	**IMI**	1462	− 26	...	19.9
...	...	Inspirit Energy♦	...	...	...	...
10200	6740	Judges Scientific♦	9060	− 140	...	45.7
101½	72½	LPA♦	82½	− 1	...	...
...	...	Meggitt	798¾	+ ⅝	...	...
543¾	200¾	**Melrose**‡	471½	− 14¾	...	...
323½	217	Morgan Advanced	251½	+ 1	...	10.6
325	187½	Mpac♦	205	...	...	5.3
745	318	MS Intl♦	715	...	...	...
2855	1720	Oxford Inst‡	2170	+ 10	...	29.6
1792¾	1044	Philips El nv	...	...	...	...
15½	11½	PipeHawk♦	11½	...	...	24.6
67½	23½	Pressure Tech♦	31½	...	...	-2.6
4232	3342	Renishaw	3650	− 12	...	20.8
31	20½	Renold♦	30	+ ⅜	...	10.7
225¾	66½	**Rolls-Royce**	220¾	− 3¾	...	...
1⅝	⅝	Ross Gp	⅝	...	...	-1.6
342½	229½	Rotork‡	304¾	− 1¾	...	33.0
200	100	SDI Group♦	107	− 1½	...	17.6
181½	111	Senior	165⅞	− 1	...	28.8
75	48	Severfield♦	64	+ ⅜	...	11.4
14	2½	Six Hundred♦	2¾	+ ¼	...	16.0
1559½	1050	SKF B	1313¾	− 26¾	...	9.7
300	225	Slingsby (HC)♦	265	...	...	4.3
1797½	1470½	**Smiths**	1671½	− 22½	...	26.5
1435	986	Solid State♦	1240	− 25	...	29.8
450	257	Somero Enter♦‡	285	− 15	...	6.3
3841	2690	Spectris	3338	− 28	...	10.9
12350	9590	**Spirax-Sarco**	9590	− 194	...	30.2
51½	26½	Surface Trsfms♦	30½	...	...	...
3¾	2	Tanfield♦	3⅞	− ⅝	...	...
440	345½	Thorpe FW♦	421	+ 11	...	29.3
2½	⅝	TP Group♦	2⅛	...	...	-3.3
102½	59	Transense Tech♦	100	...	...	73.5
...	...	Ultra Electrncs	3500	+ 6	...	37.4
454¾	302½	Vesuvius	448¼	+ 4⅜	...	11.9
1388	500	Videndum	533	+ 19	...	9.7
335	202	Volex♦	318	− 3½	...	17.3
2021	1404½	**Weir**	1923½	− 4½	...	32.4
2680	1464	XP Power‡	2415	− 25	...	12.9
150	75	Zytronic♦	77½	...	...	25.8

Health

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
1454	1103	Abcam♦	1226	+ 123	...	...
290½	177¼	AdvancedMedical♦	192½	+ 6	...	30.2
19¾	⅜	Allergy Therap♦	2½	...	...	-3.0
70½	11	Angle♦	15½	− 1½	...	-2.1
510	178½	Anpario♦	245	...	...	12.8
12294	9656	**AstraZeneca**	10886	− 64	...	...
248½	196½	**Convatec**‡	223	+ 6¾	...	52.0
43	25¾	Creightons	31	...	...	5.9
3820	2520	**Dechra Pharma**	3800	− 4	...	56.7
1½	⅛	Deltex Medical♦	⅛	...	...	-1.0
23	10½	e-Therapeutics♦	13⅜	− ⅜	...	...
130	82½	Eco Animal Hlth♦	113	...	...	13.7
51	24½	EKF Diagnostics♦	25½	− ¾	...	7.1
65	35¼	Futura Medical♦	48⅞	...	...	...
3272	2062	Genus	2084	− 36	...	37.0
1530½	1296	**GSK**‡	1530½	− 3¼	...	17.6
⅜	¼	Gunsynd♦	¼	...	...	3.1
353½	265¾	**Haleon**‡	336¾	+ 2	...	...
2205	1190½	**Hikma Pharms**	2110	− 17	...	15.8
335	134½	Hutchmed China♦	253	− 6½	...	...
4¼	1½	ImmuPharma♦	1⅞	...	...	-0.6
7025	1365	Indivior	1761	− 3	...	...
88½	42	Inspiration Health♦	44	− ½	...	6.8
38	17½	IXICO♦	19½	...	...	6.2
501	491½	Medidinic	501	+ ½	...	31.3
3½	1¼	N4 Pharma♦	1½	...	...	-1.7

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
71½	34¾	NIOX Group♦	71½	+ ⅛	...	71.6
93.99	73.32	Novartis	CHF92.71	- 0.18	...	10.6
4	2	Omega Diags♦	2⅛	...	...	-0.8
14	1¾	Ovoca Bio♦	1¾	...	...	-0.5
562	263½	Oxford Biomedica	263½	- 5½	...	11.8
5	⅞	Physiomics♦	1¾	...	...	-6.7
8½	3¼	Proteome Scies♦	6⅜	+ ⅛	...	...
6570	5556	**Reckitt Benckiser**	5922	+ 14	...	...
63½	15⅛	RUA Life Sciences♦	16¼	- 1¼	...	-1.5
217½	70	Sareum Hldgs♦	80	...	...	...
1314½	984½	**Smith & Neph**	1038½	- 13	...	23.5
250	203	Spire Hcare	228	+ 2½	...	...
23½	6¾	Synairgen♦	7	- 1½	...	-0.3
70	48	Tissue Regenix♦	54½	...	...	...
36	7¼	Totally♦‡	7¼	- ⅜	...	11.5
435	295	Tristel♦	425	...	...	87.6
18½	6	ValiRx♦	6⅛	...	...	...

Industrials

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
107	54⅜	Accsys Tech♦	74	+ ⅜	...	...
4650	3342⅞	BASF	3770⅞	- 192½	...	7.4
5377⅛	4079⅞	Bayer DM50	4144⅜	- 120⅛	...	48.3
175	46½	Biome Tech♦	160	...	...	-5.3
2⅝	1½	Byotrol♦	1½	...	...	...
...	...	Camb Gbl Timber♦	6¾	...	...	-9.0
79⅜	50⅞	Coats Grp	79⅜	+ 1¾	...	17.7
7218	4881	**Croda**‡	4881	- 175	...	21.2
1020	575	Cropper (James)♦‡	780	...	...	23.7
129	87⅝	Elementis	123⅛	- ⅛	...	...
17½	11	Hardide♦	11½	...	...	-2.2
2373	1543	Johnson Math	1690½	- 43½	...	21.3
1601	1180	**Mondi**‡	1365	- 8	...	10.4
110	77½	Robinson♦‡	92½	...	...	...
368½	241¾	**DS Smith**‡	289¼	+ 1	...	16.4
743⅞	535¼	Swire Pacific	571¼	- 7¼	...	...
16½	6⅝	Symph Environ♦	7	...	...	...
167⅜	41	Synthomer	41	- 2¼	...	0.8
2622½	2024⅛	Takeda Pharm	2622½	- 37½	...	14.7
5¾	1¼	Velocys♦	1¼	- ⅛	...	-1.5
1913	1338	Victrex	1422	- 22	...	16.9
640	397½	Wynnstay Group♦	400	...	...	9.1
410	233	Zotefoams‡	337	...	...	20.2

Leisure

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
130	51⅝	888 Hldgs	117⅞	+ ⅜	...	8.7
846	542	Accesso Tech♦	592	- 43	...	15.5
680	370	Best of the Best♦	530	...	...	5.9
1356½	501⅜	Carnival	1071	- 23	...	-1.7
132½	108	Celtic♦	129½	...	...	12.8
7	¼	Cineworld#	⅜	...	...	...
424½	215⅛	Domino's Pizza	384	+ ¾	...	19.5
1587½	1083	**Entain**‡	1089	- 20½	...	24.3
16725	9694	**Flutter Ent**	14105	- 510	...	...
38	23	Gaming Realms♦	34¼	+ ¼	...	...
290	290	Heavitree♦	290	...	...	17.4
185	65	Heavitree A♦	150	...	...	9.0
145	80	Hermes Pacific♦	80	- 10	...	...
6242	4275	**InterContinental Hotels**‡	6168	- 130	...	57.7
1⅛	¾	Minoan Gp♦	¾	...	...	-5.7
236⅛	102	Mitch & Butlers	226½	+ 2⅜	...	...
189½	82¾	On The Beach	118⅜	- ⅜	...	-6.2
1400	1005	PPHE Hotels	1065	- 10	...	-8.6
104⅜	52⅜	Rank Grp	89	- 2⅝	...	12.0
51⅛	26⅝	Restaurant Gp	49	...	...	-9.2
59½	32½	Rotala♦	59½	...	...	...
175	...	Sportech♦	83	+ 1¾	...	...
281⅛	184¾	SSP	225	- 19½	...	-4.3
4	1¾	Tasty♦	2¼	...	...	3.1
295	62½	Tintra♦#	67½	...	...	-1.1
704⅜	290⅝	Tui	493⅛	- 6	...	-5.1
2⅜	1⅛	Webis Holdings♦	1⅜	...	...	...
783½	389¾	Wetherspoon JD	723½	+ 11	...	-6.7
3641	2285	**Whitbread**	3587	- 45	...	...
1240	870	Young & Co - A♦	1080	+ 35	...	...
892	564	Young & Co - N/V♦	750	- 15	...	...

Media

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
88	68	Aeorema Comms♦	79	+ 2½	...	21.8
52	21	Altitude Group♦	46½	...	...	...
102½	63½	Arcontech Grp♦	100½	...	...	13.9
281	176⅛	Ascential	190¼	- 3⅞	...	...
660½	486⅛	**Auto Trader**‡	619	- 7¾	...	30.5
492	366	Bloomsbury Pub	396	- 9	...	16.3
8	⅜	Bonhill Group♦	⅝	- ⅛	...	-1.5
172½	87	Catalyst Media♦	117½	...	...	...
¼	...	Catenae♦	⅛	...	...	-0.2
...	...	DCD Media♦#	100	- 30	...	5.0
58½	43	Ebiquity♦	46	...	...	...
1749	643	Future	777½	- ½	...	13.3
196	144⅞	GlobalData♦‡	157½	...	...	7.8
120¾	50	Hyve Group	120½	...	...	...
196	69⅜	IG Design Grp♦	139½	- ½	...	20.4
776	506½	**Informa**	754⅜	+ 4⅛	...	...
90	55⅛	ITV	74¼	+ 1¾	...	7.9
9¾	4⅛	Jaywing♦	4½	- ⅛	...	...
3¾	1½	Live Company Gp♦#	2	...	...	-0.4
171	83½	ME Group	162	+ 1	...	28.2
...	...	Mediazest♦	...	...	...	-4.7
48½	26½	Merit Grp♦	48½	- 1½	...	...
42½	1½	Mirada♦	1½	- 1⅜	...	...
58	38½	Mission Group♦	39	...	...	6.6
280⅜	172⅜	Moneysupermarket	243¾	- 1⅜	...	24.8
1744	1206	News Corp A	1628⅛	+ 27¼	...	26.5
1782	1231¾	News Corp B	1686¼	+ 26	...	27.5
1112	554	Next 15 Group♦	607	+ 1	...	...
995⅛	754	**Pearson**	866⅛	- 8¾	...	41.4
4⅜	2	Primorus Inv♦	2⅞	...	...	5.3
198	107½	Quarto	110	...	...	6.1
120⅝	66¼	Reach‡	82⅜	+ 1⅞	...	91.6
1⅝	¾	REACT Grp♦	1⅝	...	...	23.5
2790	2157	**Relx**	2790	- 38	...	36.8
615⅜	445⅜	**Rightmove**	554⅜	- 8	...	31.3
101⅞	65	SpaceandPeople♦	95	+ 6½	...	...
315	190	STV Group‡	207	+ 1	...	5.0
230	122½	System1 Group♦	215	...	...	10.2
2994½	2272½	21st Cent Fox Inc A	2612	+ 76⅞	...	14.3
2771¾	2143⅜	21st Cent Fox Inc B	2401⅝	+ 63⅜	...	13.1
...	...	Vela Tech♦	...	...	...	10.3
...	...	Wilmington	300	...	...	19.1
1051½	731¾	**WPP**	750¾	+ ¾	...	14.3
112½	77½	Zinc Media♦	87	...	...	-5.5

Natural resources

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
¾	⅜	ADM Energy♦	½	...	...	...
...	...	Advance Energy♦#	⅛	...	...	-0.1
29½	11¼	AFC Energy♦	15⅝	- ⅛	...	...
31	20½	Afentra PLC♦	26⅞	- ⅞	...	...
⅛	...	Alba Mineral Res♦	...	...	...	-1.8
½	⅛	Alien Metals♦	⅛	...	...	-6.1
88¾	52⅜	Alumina	52¾	+ ¾	...	11.0
1¼	⅞	Aminex	1	...	...	-6.0
1¾	...	Amur Mins Corp♦#	...	...	...	-2.0
736195⅛	2973⅝	Anglo Amer Plat	2973⅝	- 174⅜	...	2.1
3672½	1970	**Anglo American**‡	2235	- 61	...	4.4
121	50½	Anglo Asian Mng♦	68	- ½	...	5.9
1805	1042½	**Antofagasta**‡	1409	- 46	...	14.5
4⅜	2⅜	Arc Minerals♦	3	...	...	2.2
3½	2	Ariana Res♦	2⅝	...	...	3.5
⅝	¼	Arkle Resources♦	¼	...	...	-1.0
2	¾	Armadale Cap♦	¾	...	...	...
1⅝	⅞	Asiamet Rsrcs♦	1	...	...	...
380	188	Atalaya Mine♦‡	343	+ 1	...	4.3
¼	...	Baron Oil♦	...	...	...	...
4¾	1⅜	Beowulf Mining♦	1½	...	...	-6.5
...	...	Bezant Res♦	...	...	...	-0.7
2855	2052	BHP Group‡	2277	- 77	...	9.9
4⅞	1¾	Border & Sthn Pet♦	2⅜	+ ¼	...	...
20¾	13½	Bougainville	16⅞	- ¼	...	...
4	⅞	BowLeven♦	1¾	...	...	-2.2
567½	430	**BP**‡	520⅜	- 3	...	18.8
16⅝	6½	Cadence Min♦	7¾	...	...	0.7
2½	1½	Cadogan Petrol	1¾	...	...	25.0
1350	775	Caledonia Mining♦	832½	- 2½	...	8.1
555¼	155	Capricorn Energy	171¾	- ⅛	...	1.3
8⅜	2¼	Caspian Sunrise♦	3	...	...	89.7
125½	83	Centamin‡	88½	- 1¼	...	13.7
292½	175½	Cent Asia Metals♦	203	- 3	...	5.9
14½	4⅝	Chaarat Gold♦	4⅝	...	...	...
19⅜	12½	Chariot Oil & Gas♦	16½	+ 1⅜	...	...
4	⅝	China Nonferr Gold♦	⅝	...	...	-4.8
⅛	...	Clontarf Energy♦	...	...	...	-1.4
34½	15¼	Condor Gld♦	19¼	- ¼	...	...
⅜	⅛	Corcel♦	⅜	...	...	-0.4
10384¼	73⅜	DRD Gold	73⅜	- 1⅝	...	8.6
1⅛	⅛	ECR Minerals♦	¼	...	...	-2.0
1⅜	⅝	Empyrean Energy♦	⅞	...	...	-6.2
2184	1461	**Endeavour**‡	1638	- 21	...	24.3
30¼	14	EnQuest	14⅜	- ⅜	...	0.9
5¾	2¼	Eurasia Mining♦	2⅞	...	...	...
2½	⅞	Europa Oil&Gas♦	1¼	...	...	11.5
175	74⅛	Ferrexpo	78⅝	- ½	...	0.6
968	509⅛	**Fresnillo**	580⅛	- 12⅛	...	13.7
...	...	G3 Exploration#	28	...	...	-2.6
39	13¾	Galantas Gold♦	13¾	...	...	-2.3
6¾	1¾	GCM Resources♦	1¾	...	...	-1.5
36⅝	15¾	Gem Diamonds	15⅞	...	...	1.6
18½	8⅜	Getech♦	9	+ ⅜	...	-2.1
578	411⅜	**Glencore**‡	452	- 11¾	...	16.5
⅜	⅛	Global Petrol♦	⅛	...	...	-1.6
136513¼	988⅛	Gold Fields	988⅛	- 35⅛	...	15.2
12½	6¼	Goldplat♦	6¼	...	...	4.7
7¼	2⅛	Goldstone Res♦#	2⅛	...	...	-9.9
9⅛	5⅞	Greatld Gld♦	6⅞	...	...	...
96½	70	Griffin Mining♦	95⅜	+ ⅜	...	10.5
229½	84¾	Gulf Keystone	102¾	+ 2¾	...	6.4
25⅞	5⅝	Harland & Wolff Gp♦	12	- ¼	...	0.9
94⅞	51½	Hochschild	86⅜	- 3⅛	...	8.3
172	85	Horizonte Minrls♦	131	+ ½	...	...
351½	197⅜	Hunting PLC	308	+ 3	...	-7.8
¼	...	Independ Res♦#	...	...	...	...
272	125	Indus Gas♦	141	...	...	14.6
⅜	¼	Ironveld♦	¼	...	...	-3.9
118½	66¾	ITM Power♦	81	- 1½	...	...
13	6¼	Jubilee Metals♦	7⅜	- ⅛	...	6.2
5⅛	1⅝	Karel Diamd Res♦	4⅝	...	...	...
...	...	KEFI Gold and Copper♦	⅝	...	...	-2.8
493	380½	Kenmare Res‡	413	- 14	...	4.8
9	8¾	Lamprell#	8⅞	...	...	-0.7
20	8¼	Landore Res♦	9¾	...	...	-2.2
½	...	Lansdowne O&G♦	...	...	...	-2.6
15	10	Leeds Group♦	11½	+ 1½	...	-1.8
8¾	3½	Lexington Gold♦	5¾	...	...	...
21½	7⅛	MC Mining♦	8¼	- ¼	...	-1.7
2¼	¾	Metals Explorn♦	1⅞	...	...	3.3
¼	⅛	Nostra Terra♦	⅛	...	...	-1.0
26½	⅛	Nostrum O&G	12½	- ⅛	...	-0.1
...	...	Oil Search	218⅞	- 5⅜	...	60.3
...	...	Oilex♦#	⅛	...	...	-3.7
⅛	...	Oriole Resources♦	...	...	...	-1.1
⅞	½	Ormonde Mining♦#	¾	...	...	-3.1
14	2⅝	Orosur Mining♦	2⅝	- ⅛	...	-4.0
20⅛	12	Pan African Res♦	16	- ⅛	...	5.2
111	10½	Pantheon Res♦	28	- 5	...	...
67⅜	13	Parkmead Grp♦	15½	...	...	-1.3
⅜	⅛	Pathfinder Mins♦	¼	...	...	-2.7
120	64¾	Petra Diamonds	70	...	...	2.3
1¾	⅞	Petrel Resources♦	1⅛	...	...	-5.8
7	1⅝	Petro Matad♦	3⅛	...	...	...
125½	46	Petrofac	75¼	- 1⅛	...	-1.9
1	...	Petroneft Res♦#	...	...	...	-0.2
...	...	Petropavlovsk#	1⅛	- ⅛	...	1.6
...	...	Phoenix Global♦	6½	+ ¼	...	-1.6
18	1⅝	Plexus Holdings♦	18	...	...	-4.4
350	150	Polymetal Intl#	215	+ 50	...	...
698	499	Porvair	600	+ 4	...	23.0
19¼	5¼	Prospex Energy♦	5½	+ ¼	...	-7.3
14⅝	7½	Proton Motor Power S♦	7½	- ¼	...	-1.3
3⅜	3¼	Providence Res♦	3¼	...	...	29.0
2¾	⅞	Quadrise♦	⅞	...	...	-3.5
7¼	2	Rambler Met&Min♦#	5⅜	...	...	0.1
¼	...	Reabold Resources♦	...	...	...	-1.7
½	⅛	Red Rock Res♦	⅛	...	...	-0.6
6670⅝	4559¼	Rio Tinto Ltd	6055¼	- 59	...	6.3
6377	4486	**Rio Tinto**‡	5140	- 144	...	5.3
40	12½	San Leon Energy♦#	16½	+ 1½	...	6.1
½	⅛	Scirocco Energy♦	⅜	...	...	...
38½	21½	Serabi Gold♦	26	- 1	...	3.5
382	198⅜	Serica Energy♦	245⅜	- 9	...	...
13½	8¾	Shanta Gold♦	10¼	- ⅛	...	6.5
2604½	2200½	**Shell**	2596	+ 1½	...	13.6
15	4¾	Shuka Minerals♦	9¾	- ¾	...	-0.6
2	¾	Sound Energy♦	⅞	...	...	6.0
85¾	9¼	Star Energy♦	9¾	+ ⅜	...	-0.5
⅛	...	Sunrise Resources♦	...	...	...	-8.1
¼	...	Tertiary Minerals♦	...	...	...	-2.8
6¼	1⅝	Thor Mining♦	1¾	...	...	...
5377¼	3849¾	Total Eng SE‡	5377¼	- 26	...	12.3
¼	...	Tower Resources♦	...	...	...	-0.6
48⅞	22½	Tullow Oil	35	- ½	...	3.5
...	...	UK Oil & Gas♦	...	...	...	-1.1
222	125	URU Metals♦	125	...	...	4.0
¾	⅛	Vast Res♦	⅛	...	...	...
...	...	Victoria Oil&Gas♦#	3¾	...	...	-1.8
...	...	W Resources♦#	2⅝	...	...	-0.3
3¼	1⅞	Westmount Engy♦	1⅞	...	...	-0.4
226	104½	Wood Grp (J)	161⅜	+ 3	...	-6.6
4½	¼	Woodbois♦	⅝	...	...	2.3
3½	1⅛	Xtract Resources♦	1¼	...	...	-2.4
7¼	3	Zephyr Energy♦	3⅜	...	...	-4.4

Professional & support services

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
5350	3280	4imprint Grp	5040	+ 10	...	85.0
657½	460	Andrews Sykes♦	640	+ 10	...	20.4
5874	3829	**Ashtead**	5184	- 24	...	25.2
7¾	⅞	Asimilar Group♦	1	...	...	...
78½	38	AssetCo♦	40½	- ½	...	0.2
55	40½	Avisen♦	47	...	...	...
148	114½	Begbies Traynor♦	114½	- 1¾	...	...
226	154½	Blancco Tech♦	225	...	...	80.6
3225	2664	**Bunzl**	2925	- 16	...	22.1
42⅝	16⅛	Capita	17⅜	+ ½	...	1.3
41½	36	CEPS♦	41	...	...	-9.3
160	102½	Christie Group♦	102½	...	...	43.6
2235	1788½	**Compass**	2046	- 18	...	49.7
252	97	CPPGroup♦	147½	- 2½	...	...
68½	45	Croma Security♦	49	- ½	...	7.0
5024	4030	**DCC**	4661	+ 82	...	15.4
104	30	De La Rue	64⅛	+ 2⅜	...	8.4
3308	2226	**Diploma**	3084	- 40	...	55.1
938	626	Discoverie	693	- 12	...	56.8
33	23½	Driver Group♦‡	27½	...	...	13.1
252	145⅜	Essentra‡	153⅜	+ 5¾	...	17.2
3160	2568	**Experian**	2725	- 64	...	34.9
12850	9094	Ferguson	12220	- 275	...	18.0
274	225	FIH Group♦	242	...	...	...
10⅝	5	Grafenia♦	9	...	...	-6.6
485	317	Hargeaves Serv♦‡	455	- 15	...	4.7
735	517½	Impellam Grp♦	682½	+ 7½	...	37.3
7½	4	Ince G♦#	5⅛	...	...	2.9
4528	3619	**Intertek**‡	4107	- 79	...	23.0
197⅝	115⅜	IWG	157⅝	- 4¼	...	-6.0
138	77	Johnson Srvce♦	133¾	- 1⅜	...	83.6
200	106	Journeo♦	200	+ 7½	...	44.8
110	56½	Kier Gp	110	- ⅜	...	10.7
1360	1080	Latham (J)♦	1125	...	...	6.1
990	695	Lok'n Store♦	726	+ 14	...	22.0
3100	2300	Lon Security♦	3000	...	...	16.5
327	220	LSL Prop Services	257	+ 2	...	7.1
119	86	Macfarlane‡	109	...	...	12.6
255	90	Maintel Hldgs♦	165	...	...	5.0
1930	8¼	Malvern Intl♦	24½	...	...	...
292	185	Mears Group	285½	- ½	...	24.8
105¾	61½	Mitie Gp	103⅛	+ 1	...	51.6
13¾	3¾	MobilityOne♦	6¾	- ¼	...	5.0
56½	25	Newmark Sec♦	54½	...	...	...
6½	3½	Norm Broadbent♦	5½	...	...	...
62½	37	Northern Bear♦	55	...	...	5.6
286	218½	NWF Grp♦	238½	- 2½	...	...
491½	362⅛	PageGroup‡	418⅛	+ 2⅜	...	11.3
58	45½	PCI-PAL♦	47	...	...	-9.7
11½	6¾	Petards♦	6⅞	...	...	12.5
24	12½	PHSC♦	22½	...	...	40.9
1⅞	⅜	PowerHouse Egy♦	⅜	...	...	-0.8
98	66	Record	80	+ ⅛	...	21.9
437½	283½	Redde Northgate‡	336	- 1	...	8.4
760	555	Renew Hldgs♦	725	+ 3	...	17.9
698	450	Renewi	517	+ 1	...	10.9
655⅛	465	**Rentokil**	601½	- 2	...	42.6
427	125	Restore♦‡	189	- 5½	...	22.5
610	412½	Ricardo	518	+ 8	...	46.2
600	355	Robert Walters‡	392	+ 7	...	8.9
20	11	Roebuck Food Grp♦	13½	...	...	2.0
239	207	RPS Group	221	- 1	...	...
1044	696½	**RS Group**	712¾	- 6⅜	...	18.0
58½	16	RTC Group♦	58½	...	...	...
408⅜	226⅛	RWS Hldgs♦	250½	- 3	...	22.9
431	365	Science Group♦	407	...	...	18.7
172½	136⅞	Serco‡	149⅝	+ 1⅞	...	6.1
57½	27½	Smiths News	42⅞	+ ⅜	...	4.1
3596	2452	**Smurfit Kappa**	2758	- 28	...	12.5
44	25⅜	Staffline Gp♦	29	...	...	22.3
484½	332	SThree	371	- ½	...	12.0
137½	102½	Synectics♦	112½	...	...	...
31	21⅝	Thruvision Group♦	28½	...	...	...
81½	35	Tribal♦	50	+ 1	...	15.6
87	51	Vianet♦‡	75½	...	...	...
798	504½	Vp	522½	- 2½	...	12.8
2⅜	1⅛	Westminster♦	1¼	...	...	-1.6

Real estate

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
131¼	95½	Shaftesbury Cap	120	+ 1½	...	35.2

Retailing

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
100½	41⅜	AO World	84⅜	...	...	...
590½	295½	**B&M European**	584½	+ 5½	...	13.6
42⅝	20¼	Brown (N)♦	21⅛	...	...	6.2
112½	40¾	Card Factory	108¾	+ 2	...	...
2192	1473	CVS Group♦	1610	+ 101	...	45.1
165	104¾	DFS Furn	114	+ 6¾	...	6.0
1275	712½	Dunelm	1057	- 3	...	14.2
899	621	**Frasers Group**	813	+ 16	...	36.1
2904	1673	Greggs‡	2480	- 12	...	21.7
226⅛	126½	Halfords	204¾	+ 6¾	...	6.8
759⅛	480⅞	Howden Joinery	748⅜	- 1⅛	...	14.1
941	675	Inchcape	771	- 1	...	26.0
5¼	1⅝	IQ-AI	5¼	+ ⅜	...	...
186⅝	89⅛	**JD Sports**	144⅞	+ 11⅞	...	17.5
291½	203	**Kingfisher**	220⅜	+ 4⅝	...	5.5
129⅛	61½	Lookers	129⅛	...	...	8.3
236	93⅛	**Marks & Spencer**	236	+ 5	...	...
10½	4⅛	Mothercare♦	4⅛	- ⅛	...	-2.5
138⅞	57⅛	Naked Wines♦	57⅛	- ¾	...	...
7350	4383	**Next**	7350	+ 244	...	14.0
976⅜	343⅜	**Ocado**	647¾	- 160½	...	...
28⅜	14⅞	Pendragon	27	...	...	8.4
397½	257¾	Pets at Home	348¾	+ 4⅜	...	14.2
188½	72⅞	Saga	118½	- ⅛	...	...
289½	169⅞	**Sainsbury's**	274½	- 2¼	...	23.0
1714	1132½	WH Smith	1375	- 6	...	...
27¼	14¼	Sosandar♦	22½	+ ¼	...	...
...	...	Studio Retail#	115	- 2½	...	2.4
284½	199⅛	**Tesco**	269½	- 1	...	13.7
56⅜	38	Topps Tiles	49	- ½	...	8.8

Technology

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
100½	59	Access Intell♦	59	...	...	-8.1
131	9½	Aferian plc♦	18	+ ½	...	3.2
196½	126	Alfa Financial‡	165	+ 2	...	25.8
13¾	8¼	Allied Minds	13¾	+ 3⅛	...	-1.2
412	268	Aptitude Software	270	...	...	30.3
265	162½	Bango♦	190	- 3	...	...
33	21	BATM Adv Coms	28¾	- ⅝	...	12.0
38	14¼	Berkeley Res	19½	...	...	-8.3
18¾	5¾	Blackbird♦	9½	...	...	...
1¼	¾	CloudCoCo Group♦	¾	...	...	-1.9
2502	1810	Computacenter	2502	+ 4	...	15.5
84½	55½	Concurrent Tech♦	73½	...	...	17.4
11½	5¾	Corero♦	7⅛	- ⅛	...	...
2250	1080	Craneware♦	1585	+ 10	...	72.2
3¼	1¾	Crimson Tide♦	2¼	...	...	15.0
24	11¼	CyanConn Hldgs♦	12⅞	...	...	...
261½	157½	D4t4 Solutions♦	182	...	...	21.5
21	13	Dillistone Group♦	13½	...	...	-3.9
⅜	...	EQTEC♦	...	...	...	-0.9
870	511	FDM Group‡	511	- 21	...	17.7
18	10¾	Filtronic♦	16½	+ ½	...	44.5
2165	1230	First Derivts♦	1584	- 14	...	...
636½	213¾	GB Group♦	219⅛	- 1⅜	...	16.7
180½	135	GreshamTech	144½	...	...	...
68½	24¼	Ilika♦	39½	...	...	...
132½	91	Ingenta♦‡	123½	- 1	...	72.2
77	38	Intercede♦	52	...	...	17.9
189⅜	112	Iomart♦	159	- 8	...	17.4
59⅞	16⅜	IQE♦	18⅛	- ⅛	...	...
129	112½	K3 Business Tch♦	123	...	...	-2.1
1694	1048⅝	LG Electronics	1464⅞	+ 81⅜	...	3.9
⅛	⅛	Location Sciences♦#	⅛	...	...	-2.3
56½	42	MTI Wireless♦	45½	...	...	15.1
55¾	17	Nanoco Gp	17⅛	...	...	...
116½	74	Netcall♦	88	...	...	...
49½	35	Northamber♦	45½	...	...	...
25¾	10	Online Blockchain♦	10	- ½	...	-5.2
119	80½	Oxford Metrics♦	97	...	...	42.1
8½	2½	Parity♦	2½	- ¼	...	-3.6
41½	28½	Pennant Intl♦	37½	...	...	...
634½	390¾	Playtech	487	- 11¾	...	5.1
379¾	297⅛	QinetiQ	326⅛	- ¾	...	25.4
92	20½	RM	60⅜	...	...	12.0
1039	679¾	**Sage**	1020	- 3½	...	39.1
7⅝	5	Seeing Machines♦	5½	- ⅛	...	...
116½	37	Shearwater Grp♦	43	- ½	...	26.6
54	31½	Smartspace S'ware♦	42½	+ 1	...	-4.4
1534	1071	Softcat	1440	- 19	...	28.2
286⅛	136⅜	Spirent Comms	136⅜	- 3⅛	...	12.7
68	25⅛	SRT Marine♦	48	...	...	...
525	363½	Tele. Ericsson	416⅜	- 1¼	...	7.5
112½	72½	Touchstar♦	96¼	...	...	...
1000	720	Tracsis♦	810	...	...	...
19½	12¼	Trakm8♦	15½	- 1½	...	...
165	81	Triad Grp	125	...	...	13.7
1380	49	Wandisco♦	72	- 1	...	-1.3
710	360	Water Intel♦	360	- 12	...	19.8
211½	144½	Xaar	168½	+ 2	...	...
5⅛	⅛	Yourgene♦	½	...	...	-0.3
207½	55½	Zoo Digital♦	55½	...	...	...

Telecoms

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
200½	100	AdEPT Technology♦‡	200½	...	...	...
141	103⅝	**Airtel Africa**	127⅛	- 1⅛	...	11.3
160¼	112	**BT Group**	120½	- ¾	...	11.7
85¼	47⅞	Currys plc	49	- ¼	...	2.3
1210	1012	Gamma Comms♦‡	1124	- 28	...	20.3
128⅛	78¾	Helios Towers	78¾	- 2	...	-7.1
2215½	1003	Just Eat T'away	1095	- 53	...	-2.3
¼	...	Mobile Streams♦	...	...	...	-1.6
2¼	⅝	Mobile Tornado♦	1⅜	...	...	-8.2
2500	1464	Telecom Plus	1564	- 26	...	40.1
108¾	70	**Vodafone**	81	...	...	...

Transport

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
336½	224	Braemar Ship#	233	+ 3	...	7.7
528	285	EasyJet	434	+ 3⅜	...	-2.7
6⅞	2⅜	Esken Limited	2⅞	...	...	-0.1
157⅞	93½	FirstGroup	157¾	- 1¾	...	37.5
425	251	Fisher (James)	347	- 7	...	-6.2
173½	93⅝	**International Airlines**	152⅛	- 3⅛	...	-3.3
272⅜	183⅛	IDS	267¼	+ 1½	...	3.0
439¼	322	Irish Cont Uts‡	394	+ 1	...	...
1381½	667¾	Jet2♦‡	1114	- 3	...	-5.9
198⅞	75⅜	Mobico Group	85½	- 3	...	-5.0
1035	820	Ocean Wilson	968	+ 14	...	4.9
...	...	Stagecoach	104⅝	...	...	14.7
23	15½	Sutton Harbour♦	15½	...	...	-9.0
372	192⅜	Wincanton	277	- 6	...	7.5
3158	1357½	Wizz Air	1910	- 35	...	-4.3

Utilities

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
172⅜	67¼	**Centrica**	172⅜	+ 2⅞	...	17.4
255½	249	ContourGlobal	251	+ ½	...	28.3
716	473⅜	Drax Group‡	489½	- 15⅝	...	36.2
555	432	Jersey Electricity	450	...	...	8.5
1162	858⅜	**National Grid**	1029	- 5½	...	23.9
9¾	5⅝	OPG Power♦	8¼	- ¼	...	5.3
1000	599½	Pennon	625	- 8	...	45.2
¾	¼	Rurelec♦	⅜	...	...	-0.3
2975	2213	**Severn Trent**	2442	- 37	...	...
1900	1428	**SSE**‡	1698½	- 4	...	6.6
1102½	828⅛	**United Utilities**	987¾	- 7½	...	90.6

♦AIM company; # Price at suspension; † Ex dividend; ‡ Ex scrip; ▲ Ex rights issue; ▼ Ex all; § Ex capital distribution; * figures or report awaited; . . . No significant data. Companies in bold are constituents of the FTSE 100 Index. Investment Cos sector Nav Dis or Prm supplied by Morningstar.

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2.



3.



Photographer who captured Jimi Hendrix
Mike Berkofsky
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Obituaries

Douglas Lenat

Leading computer scientist and mathematician who built a reputation as one of the most innovative thinkers in the field of AI

A few hundred gamers gathered at a hotel in Silicon Valley on the weekend of July 4, 1981. They sat at tables to play Traveller Trillion Credit Squadron, a complex war game in which each participant had a budget of a trillion dollars to control a fleet of futuristic battleships.

One of the competitors, Doug Lenat, a 30-year-old computer science professor at Stanford University, had some help. He had built an artificial intelligence (AI) system named Eurisko which operated at a cutting-edge computing laboratory in Palo Alto, near San Francisco. Lenat taught Eurisko the rules of the game and asked it to conceive a winning strategy.

For a month, Eurisko ruminated overnight on computers at the Xerox Parc facility. Finally the programme suggested spending the budget on a vast number of well-armed but immobile and defenceless small ships rather than a handful of behemoths. This contrasted with the tactics of the human players, who usually picked a diverse array of heavily defended moveable craft and followed traditional military strategies. And it worked.

"What happened is that the enemy would take its shots, and every one of those shots would sink our ships. But it didn't matter, because we had so many," Lenat told The New Yorker. Battles between humans usually lasted several hours; Eurisko and Lenat typically triumphed in a couple of minutes.

The next year the rules were tweaked to favour agile fleets but Eurisko won again, scuppering its own ships as soon as they were damaged so it would not be penalised for their inability to move. Treating the fleet as disposable cannon fodder primed to self-destruct was, Lenat conceded, "socially horrifying". There would be no hat-trick of victories: the judges warned him that if Eurisko entered again the following year they would cancel the tournament.

Lenat had shown that the processing power of computers and their impassive ability to examine problems using logic allowed them to reach conclusions that would not necessarily occur to humans. But Eurisko had acted with a psychopathic indifference to the lives of the sailors on the imaginary boats. (Not for nothing would the system be name-checked in a 1993 episode of *The X-Files* about a homicidal computer.)

If AI did not think like a human or have the remotest concept of how the world works, how could it understand the context of the challenges it was being asked to address and provide viable solutions?

What AI needed to be truly valuable, Lenat decided, was a big dose of common sense. This conviction dominated the rest of his life and turned into, as one publication put it in 1993, "perhaps the most massive programming effort in the history of computing". It was also, to his sternest critics, one of the most fruitless.

Early AI, he said on a 2021 podcast, was "very much like a clever dog performing tricks. We could get them to do tricks but they never really understood what they were doing. Sort of like when you get a dog to fetch the morning newspaper. The dog might do that successfully but the dog has no idea what a newspaper is, or what it says."

So Lenat set out to teach his system,

WILLIAM WIDMER/REDUX/EYEVINE



Lenat at the Cycorp offices in Austin in 2018. He served on advisory boards at Microsoft and Apple but despite having a sociable nature he preferred a low profile

Cyc, common sense and general knowledge, programming it to absorb everyday life lessons, basic facts and statements of the obvious that a young child might understand through a mix of education and experience, but which would be beyond a standard AI project's frame of reference.

An object cannot be in two places at once, Lenat informed Cyc. If there is coffee in a cup and you turn the cup upside down, the liquid will spill. If a person walks indoors and is dripping wet, it's probably raining outside. Loving is a more intense emotion than liking. A child cannot be older than its parents. A person is bigger than an apple.

With a deep and broad knowledge

What AI needed, he decided, was a big dose of common sense

base a machine can learn to infer and assume, Lenat believed, deducing what for a person would be obvious enough to be left unsaid.

He liked to give the example of a news article stating that a bank robber was sentenced to prison. There is no need to explain to the average reader that the thief was also caught, arrested, put on trial and found guilty. But a computer must be trained to comprehend the white part of the page — what is implied in the blank spaces between words, sentences and paragraphs — as well as the meaning of the text. Otherwise it will be tripped up by ambiguities in questions such as: "Can a can cancan?"

In 1984 Lenat assembled half a dozen of the cleverest people he knew for a meeting to discuss what he grandly envisioned as nothing less than a Manhattan Project for AI. How many rules would a programme require, he wondered, for an operable understanding of the ways of the world? The consensus was roughly a million rules, amounting to a hundred person-years worth of work. This proved optimistic.

"Intelligence," Lenat revised himself in 1988, "is 10 million rules."

In 1993 he said he expected Cyc to be finished in three years. The next year he expressed the hope that by 1999 Cyc would be as ubiquitous as word processing software. The project was ongoing at the time of his death, some four decades, 2,000 person years and more than 25 million rules after its inception.

After so long in such a dynamic industry, Lenat's painstaking quest seemed outmoded as content-producing generative AI became all the buzz. Microsoft, Google, Meta and others focused on chatbots trained to analyse vast troves of data, often harvested from the internet, and to respond to queries by predicting suitable answers word by word. This alternative approach leans on billions or even trillions of behaviour-defining parameters.

Lenat respected such efforts but felt that without a solid foundation of facts beneath the educated guesses, virtual assistants such as Siri and Alexa were no smarter than the newspaper-fetching dog, while chatbots such as ChatGPT were convincing but not fully trustworthy, with a veneer of intelligence but often inaccurate and even risible responses.

AI without the rules-based grounding Lenat sought for Cyc was brittle, he contended, citing the example of a self-driving car that freezes or tries a bizarre manoeuvre when confronted with an unexpected road hazard. He wanted his own digital baby to grow up to be more well rounded and taught it history, poetry and table manners.

Douglas Bruce Lenat was born in Philadelphia in 1950, to Nathan, who ran a bottling company, and Gertrude (née Cohen). Nicole Hermanson, a daughter from a marriage that ended in divorce, survives him, along with his second wife, Mary Shepherd, an AI researcher who started Cyc with him.

Menial after-school jobs, including cleaning rat cages, persuaded Lenat to seek a well-paid and stimulating career. Settling on computing, and paying tuition fees by programming a database for American military aircraft carriers, he gained undergraduate degrees in mathematics and physics at the University of Pennsylvania in 1972.

While studying for a master's in applied mathematics he read a book about AI that piqued his interest. He enrolled at Stanford to study for a PhD in computer science, later becoming an assistant professor at the university in northern California and earning a reputation as an innovative thinker in the field of AI.

This brought him to the attention of Bobby Inman, an admiral in the United States navy who was director of the National Security Agency and deputy director of the CIA in the early Eighties. Amid concerns that American technological superiority was under threat from Japan, Inman, a Texan, was the driving force behind the creation of a computer research and development consortium in Austin.

Lenat was hired as the principal AI expert and the US government— which pictured Cyc as a tool to detect terrorist threats — and prominent private companies including Apple and Kodak backed his work to the tune of millions of dollars a year. This enabled Lenat to hire dozens of "ontological engineers" to feed knowledge to Cyc, which took its name from "encyclopaedia". A philosophy degree was often more useful than a background in programming, he noted. In 1994 the project was spun off into an independent company, Cycorp, which he headed.

Lenat served on advisory boards at Microsoft and Apple and authored more than a hundred publications. Despite his sociable nature and penchant for patterned shirts, he instinctively preferred to keep a low profile. Genial but tenacious, he professed to be untroubled by the sceptics or the swift rise of AI services that enjoyed more fame and funding.

Still, as he aged and confronted his own mortality, he grew keener for Cyc to deliver some tangible results. The company deploys logic-based reasoning to help businesses become more efficient, for instance helping hospitals to manage staffing and patient flow and supply chains to organise workloads.

A broader hope was that by questioning existing assumptions and paradigms, AI systems such as Cyc will identify novel solutions to some of humanity's problems. "Cyc is conscious [in that] it understands it's a computer programme, it understands where and when it's running, it understands who's talking to it, it understands what its tasks are," he said in 2021. But could AI really rival or surpass human intelligence? "We're meat machines," Lenat said. "Absolutely machines can think, certainly as well as humans."

Douglas Lenat, artificial intelligence computer scientist, was born on September 13, 1950. He died of bile duct cancer on August 31, 2023, aged 72

Register

Mike Berkofsky

Magazine photographer of stars from Jimi Hendrix to Jane Birkin who went on to make celebrated commercials in America

MIKE BERKOFSKY







Berkofsky at Bow Street Studios in the early 1960s; his potent image of Jimi Hendrix with "spur of the moment" red backlighting, which became an album cover; and Jane Birkin in 19 magazine

Mike Berkofsky was on the verge of reluctantly giving up his ambitions to be a photographer when he received a phone call that was to save his career.

"It was January 1967, I was 22 years old and I was just starting out as a photographer," he recalled. "My father-in-law was trying to get me to drive a taxi because I hadn't made any money for a long time. Then I got a call from the editor at Rave magazine."

Pop music was on the cusp of a dramatic sea change and with the psychedelic era about to explode, Rave wanted to be ahead of the curve. "There's this new guy called Jimi Hendrix," Terry Hornett, the magazine's editor, told Berkofsky. "He's got a record out called *Hey Joe*. Can you photograph him this afternoon?"

It was only his second magazine commission and, trying hard not to sound desperate, he told Hornett that he thought he could manage to fit it in.

"I really wasn't prepared," Berkofsky recalled to The Guardian in a 2013 interview. "When Hendrix arrived, you could smell him 30 seconds before you could see him, the patchouli he wore was so strong. He was a vision, wearing a crimson Napoleonic velvet jacket. He was very shy, polite and hardly said a word, floating gracefully above the moment."

The magazine had also sent an interviewer and Berkofsky had just 20 minutes for the shoot. On the spur of the moment he added a red backlight to give Hendrix's wild Afro hair a halo effect. "It was a total fluke but it made the shot. Of course, I worried I'd overdone it afterwards, but you've got to go with your gut. I wanted to match the Hendrix showmanship," he later said.

He shot three rolls of film, delivered them to Rave's offices in Covent Garden — and never saw them again. "I asked for them back and they said they'd return them when they were finished with them. Naively I believed them. That was the biggest mistake I ever made," he noted ruefully.

He subsequently discovered that a flood in the magazine's basement had been followed by an infestation of rats and between the tide and the rodents' teeth everything had been lost, including his Hendrix shoot and Rave's priceless archive of photographs of other 1960s bands such as the Beatles and the Rolling Stones.

Yet all was not quite lost. By chance, Berkofsky had taken a single transparency at the start of the shoot as a test to check the exposure and had kept it. Unfortunately, in the 1970s it went missing again amid the chaos of his work schedule and travel commitments. "I had given up ever seeing the Hendrix picture again, though I remembered how the photograph looked and dreamt in my sleep of finding it," he said.

It was not until 2010 that he received a call out of the blue from his former assistant Robbie Howard, who told him that he had found a cardboard box of his old slides and contact sheets in his garage. The box was "soggy, oily and rotting" while the plastic folders inside containing the slides had decomposed. There among them, though, was the long-lost Hendrix slide.

It was badly damaged and it took Berkofsky three years to restore it to its full glory as he worked on the contrast and the colour. The photograph has since become one of the most potent images of Hendrix. Used as the cover artwork for the *Both Sides of the Sky* album, a 2018 archival collection of previously unreleased Hendrix recordings, it is now part of the permanent collection in the recently reopened National Portrait Gallery.

After his Hendrix shoot, work picked up. Terence Donovan, a fellow Londoner who shared a similarly humble background and told him that "all the cream come from the Hackney Road", adopted him as a protégé and recommended him to Vogue and The Sunday Times Magazine.

Over the next decade Berkofsky shot more than 100 magazine covers for Vogue, Marie Claire, Harper's Bazaar, Honey and other titles. His fashion shoots of top British models of the day from Twiggy to Penelope Tree were noted for his innovative lighting techniques, in which he attempted to recreate the natural luminescence he had admired in paintings by Renoir, Cézanne and Monet on teenage visits to the National Gallery with his mother.

He subsequently went into making commercials. In 1984 he moved to America, initially to join the production company run by the film directors Ridley and Tony Scott, but then set up his own company in Los Angeles. He directed Linda Evangelista in an Opium commercial for Yves Saint Laurent, Michael Jackson in the celebrated "street" commercial for LA Gear, and Elizabeth Taylor advertising her own Passion fragrance.

He also had an infamous clash with Helmut Newton while shooting a Chanel commercial. Newton was present to take some stills but became so overbearing that Berkofsky had him evicted from the shoot. "I greatly admired Helmut but he loved to take over," he said.

Michael Berkofsky was born in London in 1944, the son of Stella (née Nedbalsky) and Sidney Berkofsky. His early years were spent living above a snack bar in Stamford Hill but after his father left when he was three, his mother placed him in a Jewish orphanage in south London. He remained there until he had completed his O-levels at Strand Grammar School in Tulse Hill and returned to live with his mother in Dalston when he was 16. In later life he tracked down his father, who was living in Miami as Sidney Bennet, and to his astonishment he discovered that he, too, was a professional photographer.

His own passion for photography began at an early age. On leaving school he enrolled at Regent Street Polytechnic and took a job in a darkroom, absorbing everything he could about techniques and composition.

Three marriages all ended in divorce or separation and he is survived by five children, Emma, Blossom, Ava, Stella and Nicholas.

Latterly he lived in Totnes, Devon, where he was a popular local character and loved cooking for family and friends, including a gravlax recipe passed down through generations.

Mike Berkofsky, photographer, was born on March 2, 1944. He died of oesophagus cancer on August 21, 2023, aged 79

Christopher Campbell

Clubbable accountant who oversaw the sale of public assets including the National Bus Company and parts of British Rail

Eyebrows were raised in 1994 when the government chose Christopher Campbell to sell the non-passenger operations of the state-owned British Railways Board, despite the fact that he had no experience of the railways.

The accountant was dismissed by Jimmy Knapp, general secretary of the Rail, Maritime and Transport union, as a "retailer" having spent most of his career at Debenhams, the department store group. Yet he had been much praised for his role in breaking up the National Bus Company (NBC) into regional companies that were sold to the private sector from 1985.

By March 1988, 66 of 72 operators had been sold and The Sunday Times said: "The privatisation of NBC has proved far more successful than was originally expected, with total proceeds expected to exceed £325 million. Some forecasts had suggested a maximum of £100 million." The government made £89 million profit on the sales.

Six years later Campbell set to work on selling off the part of British Rail that handles freight, parcels and maintenance to create 70 private companies. With the exception of an acre of land next to Battersea Dogs & Cats Home and one or two minor subsidiaries, he fulfilled the brief before New Labour's 1997 election landslide, by which time he had switched political allegiance from Conservative to Labour.



Christopher James Campbell was born in Kenton, Middlesex, in 1936, the younger son of Dr David Campbell and Nettie Phyllis (née Burgess), a midwife who died when Christopher was eight. His father was doctor to the British Lions hockey team and, later, Wembley Stadium.

After Epsom College, where he excelled at mathematics, he went straight into accountancy training at the auditor Spicer Pegler. He did National Service in 1959, where he was a second lieutenant with the Royal Army Pay Corps and became a captain paymaster with the Honourable Artillery Company until 1963.

Campbell then joined Debenhams' internal audit department in London and became a director, with responsibility for Lotus and Hardy Amies, Queen Elizabeth's dress designer who coincidentally fashioned staff uniforms for British Rail.

While climbing the corporate ladder, he became increasingly involved in the right-wing think tank The Bow Group. He developed a broad spectrum of political and business contacts, aided by frequent dinner parties at his Westminster flat, which may have smoothed his transition to troubleshooter for nationalised industries.

After his successful sell-off of the National Bus Company, Campbell was in 1989 appointed chairman of British Shipbuilders, which by then had been largely privatised. Lloyd's List, the insurance market's newspaper, said: "What is left of once-mighty BS is little more than a holding operation to tie up the loose ends of the government's direct involvement in shipbuilding, which is destined to fade quietly into obscurity with few likely to mourn its passing."

With most of the assets sold and little chance to shine, Campbell immediately walked into a row over closing North East Shipbuilders in Sunderland. The European Commission had blocked proposals to revive the yards and Margaret Thatcher's government wanted to turn them into an enterprise zone. That left two offers, to turn the space over to either general engineering or waste incineration. Neither was greeted with enthusiasm by local politicians or pressure groups. Campbell sympathised with returning to shipbuilding and expressed "great disappointment" when the government finally excluded the possibility in 1990. He eventually accepted the engineering solution, provided the previous shipyard workers would receive a quarter of the shares in the new business.

Another headache at British Shipbuilders was a lawsuit from the property, construction and hotels group Trafalgar House, claiming £186 million damages after buying the Scott Lithgow yard on the Lower Clyde for £12 million in 1984. He persuaded Trafalgar to settle for £17 million cash and an £8 million loan.

Balding, open and welcoming, and generously proportioned until he was advised to lose weight on medical grounds, Campbell promoted discussion at his dinner parties by assigning each guest separate pre-dinner and dinner seats. After the election of Tony Blair's New Labour he devoted dinners to putting Labour government ministers and special advisers together with company directors.

Other preferments came his way over the years, including an appointment as finance director of the National Rivers Authority advisory committee. In the 1990s he was a director of Harrods Bank when it was owned by Mohamed Al Fayed (obituary September 1, 2023).

He worked tirelessly for charities, including the British Youth Opera. On one board, Riverside Mental Health NHS Trust, he met (now Dame) Sandra Dawson. When she became master of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, in 1999 he supported the college by establishing undergraduate scholarships with a preference for women studying Stem (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) subjects.

The gregarious Campbell belonged to Brooks's and the Garrick. He voted unsuccessfully for the Garrick to admit women as members. First-time conversations with people would often lead to long evenings playing bridge with them.

Christopher Campbell CBE, accountant, was born on January 2, 1936. He died of cancer on July 19, 2023, aged 87

Court Circular

Hôtel de Charost, Rue du Faubourg St Honoré, Paris
21st September, 2023
The King this morning visited the French Senate and was received by the President of the Senate (Monsieur Gérard Larcher) and the President of the National Assembly (Madame Yaël Braun-Pivet).

His Majesty inspected the Guard of Honour before moving into the Salle des Conférences and thence to the Senate Chamber.

The President of the Senate and the President of the National Assembly addressed The King and His Majesty was graciously pleased to reply.

The Queen, accompanied by Madame Macron (wife of The President of the French Republic), this morning launched the Entente Littéraire Prize at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris.

The King and Queen afterwards visited Saint-Denis and were received by Madame Macron, the Prefect of Seine-Saint-Denis (Monsieur Jacques Witkowski) and the Mayor of Saint-Denis (Monsieur Mathieu Hanotin).

His Majesty, escorted by the Mayor, visited Rugby Installations and Her Majesty, accompanied by Madame Macron and escorted by Monsieur Shems El Khalfaoui (Deputy Mayor), viewed the table tennis area.

The King subsequently met representatives and beneficiaries of Association Objectif Emploi, before proceeding to the football pitch and meeting professional football players and representatives of football organisations.

The Queen, accompanied by Madame Macron, met representatives and beneficiaries of Maison des Femmes at Saint-Denis Town Hall, and subsequently rejoined The King to meet a group of professional footballers and young people.

Their Majesties proceeded on foot to the Basilica Cathedral of Saint-Denis and were received at the Maison d'Éducation de la Legion d'Honneur by the Head Teacher (Madame Sophie Maraux).

The King and Queen, accompanied by Madame Macron, afterwards visited le 19M and were received by the President of Chanel SAS and le 19M (Monsieur Bruno Pavlosky).

Their Majesties, escorted by the President of Chanel SAS and le 19M, Mrs Leena Nair (Global Chief Executive Officer, Chanel) and Madame Camille Hutin (Director of la Galerie du 19M and Head of Communication, le 19M), viewed the embroidery section of Lesage and met embroiderers and students of the Chanel and The Prince's Foundation Métiers d'Art Fellowship Programme in partnership with le 19M.

The Queen viewed the Maison Lesage tweed making and weaving section.

The King subsequently visited la Galerie du 19M and met artisans from Maison Goossens.

Their Majesties later visited the Marché Aux Fleurs and, having been received by the Mayor of Paris (Madame Anne Hidalgo) and Monsieur Emmanuel Gregoire (First Deputy Mayor of Paris), proceeded on foot through the Market, meeting florists and representatives of local organisations, before signing the Town Hall Parchment.

The King and Queen subsequently proceeded on foot, via Rue de la Cité, to Notre Dame Cathedral and were received at the Cathedral by The President of the French Republic and Madame Macron, the Archbishop of Paris (the Most Reverend Laurent Ulrich) and the Special Representative overseeing the reconstruction of Notre Dame following the fire in 2019 (Monsieur Philippe Jost).

Their Majesties, accompanied by The President and Madame Macron, met firefighters involved in the emergency response and representatives of the Cathedral Restoration Team, and viewed the exterior construction site.

The King, accompanied by The President of the French Republic, afterwards attended a Reception for the Climate and Nature Finance Mobilisation Forum at Musée National d'Histoire Naturelle and was received by Madame Agnès Pannier-Runacher (French Minister for Energy Transition) and the Rt Hon Claire Coutinho MP (Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero).

His Majesty subsequently officially re-opened the renovated British Embassy, 35 Rue du Faubourg St Honoré, Paris.

The King later received Monsieur Bernard Arnault (Founder, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, LVMH).

The King and Queen were received at the Élysée Palace this evening by The President of the French Republic and Madame Macron.

Kensington Palace
21st September, 2023
The Princess of Wales, Joint Patron, the Royal Foundation of The Prince and Princess of Wales, this morning held an Early Years Meeting at Windsor Castle.

St James's Palace
21st September, 2023
The Duke of Edinburgh this morning attended a Royal Graduation Ceremony at Royal Air Force College Cranwell, Sleaford, and was received by His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Lincolnshire (Mr Toby Dennis).

The Duchess of Edinburgh, Patron, Chartered Management Institute, this morning held a Meeting of the Chartered Management Institute Women Advisory Committee.

Her Royal Highness, Colonel-in-Chief, this evening attended a Reception for Members of The Corps of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers at Windsor Castle.

St James's Palace
21st September, 2023
The Princess Royal this morning visited Jaguar Land Rover Halewood Vehicle Plant to mark the Sixtieth Anniversary of its Opening at Speke Boulevard, Liverpool, and was received by Mr Robert Owen (Vice Lord-Lieutenant of Merseyside).

The Princess Royal, President, British Olympic Association, this afternoon attended an Executive Board Meeting at 101 New Cavendish Street, London W1.

Births, Marriages and Deaths

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THEREFORE everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. Matthew 7.24-25 (NIV)

Bible verses are provided by the Bible Society

Births

BRICE-ARNOTT on 17th September 2023 to Sophie and Robert, a son, Thomas Robert Frederick, brother to Henry.

TSEVDOS
On 6th September 2023 to Rosanna (née Spendlove) and Nicholas, a daughter, Artemis Tessa.

Forthcoming Marriages

MR W. S. MACLEOD AND MISS J. J. BAILEY
The engagement is announced between William, only son of Mrs Sue MacLeod of Tillington, West Sussex and the late Mr Graeme MacLeod, and Jemima, twin daughter of Mr and Mrs Patrick Bailey of Upton Bishop, Herefordshire.

MR B. D. J. CURRAN AND MISS K. SCHMANDT
The engagement is announced between Benedict, younger son of the late Judge Patrick Curran QC and Mrs Anne Curran of Cardiff, and Kayla, daughter of Ms Sandra Schmandt of Boca Raton, USA.

Deaths

BURLTON Diana (née Prickett) passed away peacefully on 7th September 2023, aged 88. Funeral to be held at St Luke's Church, Chelsea, at noon on 4th Oct with burial at Putney Vale Cemetery, Roehampton, at 2.30pm for close friends and family. Reception to follow service in the Markham Square garden, SW3. Family flowers only please. Donations in Diana's memory to the Royal College of Music's Scholarship Fund (see RCM website), with thanks.

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DENHAM Dr Alan on 11th September 2023, aged 90, died peacefully at home. Much-loved father of Clare, Alison, Jonathan (Buzz), grandfather of eight, great-grandfather of three. Devoted husband of the late Dr Maureen. Hard-working family doctor, Bentley enthusiast (B.D.C.). Funeral at Tunbridge Wells Cemetery Chapel on Wednesday 4th October at 2pm. Family flowers only. Inquiries to Viner & Sons, West Malling, 01732 842485.

GAGE William. Right Hon, Lord Justice, (Retd). Chancellor of the dioceses of Coventry and Ely. Bill died peacefully on 13th September, aged 85. Dearly loved husband, father and grandfather. Small private cremation service. The Service of Thanksgiving will be held at St Peter & St Paul's Parish Church, King's Sutton, Banbury, OX17 3RQ on Monday 2nd October at 2.30pm. Inquiries and charitable donations may be sent please to John White Funeral Directors, 188 Watling Street East, Towcester, Northants, NN12 6DB. Tel (01327) 359266.

GUNN Renate Sigrid (née Boehme) died on 26th August 2023 in Wengen, Switzerland. Much-loved wife of Guy and mother of Ingrid, Natalie and the late Alison. A Service of Thanksgiving will be held at 10am on 16th October at St Philip's Church, Earls Court Road, London W8.

HARVEY Peter, died on 18th August 2023, aged 79. Retired senior manager of Lloyds Bank. Funeral at Canford Crematorium, Bristol, on 29th August 2023 at noon. No flowers please, any donations for RSPCA on day. Co-operative Funeral Care, WOT, Bristol.

LALE Jean Charlotte of Harpenden, died 7th September, aged 95. Widow of Peter and founder of three charities, mother of Joy, Chris, Andy, David and Mary. Funeral Monday 25th September at 12.40pm Mortlake Crematorium. Inquiries to T H Sanders & Sons 020 8876 5255.

MATTHEWS Peter John died peacefully on 9th September 2023, aged 78, in Great Amwell, Hertfordshire. Devoted husband of Diana, beloved father of John and Michael, and much-loved grandfather of Alexander and Katie. Widely renowned and respected athletics statistician, commentator, editor and author. Funeral service at Woollensbrook Crematorium, Hoddesdon on 29th September at 11am. Family flowers only please. Donations if wished to Personal Best Foundation www.austins.co.uk 'Tributes & Donations.'

MURRAY J Duncan (Yes, this is you darling). Died peacefully at home on 15th September, aged 82. Adored husband of Penny, loving father to Claudia, Daniel, Jamie, Dougal and Olivia. Memorial service at St John the Baptist, Sutton, West Sussex at 2pm on 7th October. No flowers, donations if desired to Macmillan Midhurst.

RICHARDS Audrey Molly passed away peacefully on 13th September 2023, aged 93. She will be sadly missed by all who knew and loved her. A service to celebrate Audrey's life is to be held at GreenAcres Chiltern on Wednesday 4th October at 11am. Family flowers only however donations to British Red Cross will be gratefully received c/o Arnold Funeral Service, 32 Gregories Road, Beaconsfield, Bucks HP9 1HQ. Tel 01494 685000.

SMITH Clive Anthony on 15th September 2023, aged 80, at his beloved Smith Hill Farm on Dartmoor. Cherished husband of Sue, adored father of Charlotte and Emmeline, and much-loved father-in-law of Hamish and Mark. Devoted grandad of Zak, Solomon, Raphael and Aurora. Celebrated founder of the Labelexpo series of international exhibitions. Funeral service at Glynn Valley Crematorium, Bodmin, on 28th September 2023 at 3.30pm. Inquiries to Walter C. Parson, Tavistock, PL19 8JY. Tel 01822 617300.

WALKER Ronald Jack KC, died peacefully on 19th September 2023, aged 83. Much-loved father of Matthew, David, Emma and Henry, and grandfather to Harriet, Lucy, Susannah, Kitty and Grace.

WHITWHAM Joan died peacefully on 15th September 2023, aged 100. Of New Buckenham, Norfolk. Inquiries to Rosedale Funeral Home 01379 640810.

WOOD Michael Mure KC, on 13th September 2023, peacefully at home in his 70th year. A memorial service will be held in The Temple Church, London EC4Y 7BB, on Friday 27th October 2023 at 6pm. Colourful dress required. Inquiries to: Matthews of Malmesbury, Funeral Directors. Tel: 01666 822216.

LEGAL, PUBLIC, COMPANY & PARLIAMENTARY NOTICES
To place notices for these sections please call 020 7481 4000

Thanksgiving Service General Lord Ramsbotham

A service of thanksgiving for the life and work of General Lord Ramsbotham was held on Thursday September 21, 2023, at St Margaret's Church, Westminster Abbey.

The Right Rev Anthony Ball, canon rector officiated, gave the bidding, the address and the blessing, assisted by the Rev Mark Birch, who led the prayers.

Mr Hugh Ramsbotham, brother, read the lesson: Romans 12: vi, 20. Professor Karen Bryan, vice-chancellor, York St John University, read a prayer. Mrs Charlotte Walker, granddaughter, read the poem *Not how did he die, but how did he live?* (anon). Mr Jonathan Ramsbotham and Mr Christopher Ramsbotham, grandsons, read the poem *Our Birth is but a Sleep and a Forgetting* by William Wordsworth. The Hon Richard Ramsbotham, son, read a poem written by Charles Sharp, a prisoner at HMP Wakefield.

The Hon James Ramsbotham, son, General Sir Patrick Sanders, chief of the general staff, and Mr Charlie Taylor, HM chief inspector of prisons, paid tribute.

During the service the St Margaret's Consort, conducted by Mr Greg Morris, performed Gabriel Fauré's Requiem in D minor and Mr Thomas Trotter played the organ. A quintet of the Band and Bugles of the Rifles also performed.

Among those present were: the Hon Mrs James Ramsbotham, the Hon Mrs Richard Ramsbotham (daughters-in-law), Miss Margaret Ramsbotham, Mrs Catherine Bartlett (sisters), Mr and Mrs Robert Dickinson (brother-in-law and sister-in-law), Brigadier Andrew Parker-Bowles (brother-in-law), Ms Caroline Dickinson (sister-in-law), Mr Edward Bartlett, Mr Peter Bartlett, Mrs David Bick, Mr Graham Walker, Ms Joanna Ramsbotham, Ms Niamh Ramsbotham, Lady Sanders with other members of the family.

Also present were: Earl Attlee, the Earl of Cork and Orrery, Viscount Colville of Culross, Viscount Eccles, Lord Aberdare, Lord Arbuthnot of Edrom, Lord Baker of Dorking, Lord Beith, Lord Bilimoria, Baroness Bottomley of Nettlestone, Baroness Eccles of Moulton, Lord Carlile of Berriew, Lord Carter of Coles, Baroness Chakrabarti, Lord Collins of Highbury, Lord and Lady Fellowes, Baroness Finlay of Llandaff, Baroness Garden of Frognal, Lord Gardiner of Kimble, Baroness Hamwee, Lord Hannay of Chiswick, Lord Harries of Pentregarth, Baroness Healy of Primrose Hill, Baroness Hollins, Lord Howard of Lympne CH, Lord Howell of Guildford, Lord Inglewood, Baroness Kennedy of the Shaws, Lord Laming, Lord Lisvane, Lord Luce, Baroness Mallalieu, Baroness Manningham-Buller, Lord McNally, Baroness Meacher, Baroness Morris of Yardley, Lord Moylan, Lord Ponsonby of Shulbrede, Lord Richards of Herstmonceux, Baroness Smith of Basildon, Lord and Lady Tugendhat, Baroness Walmsley, Admiral Lord West of Spithead, Baroness Whitaker, Lord Young of Cookham, the Hon Sir Michael Pakenham, Lady Bagnall, Sir David Beamish, Sir Peter Bottomley MP, Sir Edward Cazalet, Lieutenant General Sir Peter Duffell, Dame Sarah Goad, Sir Martin Jacomb, Sir Robert Neill MP, General Sir Robert and Lady Pascoe, Sir Luke Rittner, Sir John Starkey, Sir Adam Thomson, Lieutenant General Sir Michael Willcocks.

Mr Simon Adamsdale, Ms Ann Alexander-Sinclair, Mr Colin Allen, Mr Peter Ashton, Mr Jamie Balfour, Mr Stephen Bamber, Mr John Blackett-Ord, Mr Hugo Brown, Mr Peter Browne, Ms Barbara Buchanan, Ms Claire Brown, Ms Alixe Buckerfield de la Roche, Ms Zoe Burton, Mr Nick Carter, Mr Andrew Carver, Mr Benjamyn Damazer, Mr Gwyn Davies-Scourfield, Mr Nicholas de Candole, Mr Matthew Dickinson, Mr and Mrs Alexander Dickinson, Ms Charlotte Doherty, Mr Anthony Duckworth-Chad, Mr and Mrs Nigel Dunn, Mr Andy Elvin, Ms Margaret Fawcett, Mr and Mrs Adam Ferguson, Mr and Mrs George Festing, Mr Colin Fox, Mr Richard Frost, Mr Cedric Fullwood, Mr Jeremy Gaskell, Colonel Tony Gauvain, Mr Jonathan Glover, Mr Jeremy Greenwood, Mr Peter Gregory-Hood, Mr Geoff Haigh, Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Hamilton-Baillie, Mr Richard Hanford, Mr Roy Hanley, Mr Nick Hardwick, Mr Robin Harris, Mr Richard Holden MP, Brigadier David Homer, Mr James Hughes-Onslow, Mr Andrew Jardine, Mr Nicholas Jenkins, Mr Christopher Johnson-Gilbert, Mr Peter Just, Mr John Kennett, Mr Nicholas Kitson, Mr Guy L'Etang, Mr Ian Lauder, Mr Philippe Le Roux, Mr William Makower, Brigadier Allan Mallinson, Mr James McMicking, Mr Christopher Miers, Ms Anais Nassar, Mr Andrew Neilson, Mr Keval Nathwani, Mr and Mrs Robert Newcombe, Lieutenant General Anthony Palmer, Mr and Mrs Richard Pantcheff, Mr Ivor Parrish, Rear Admiral John Pentreath, Mr William Pitman, Brigadier James Plastow, Ms Elizabeth Plummer, Mr John Podmore, Mr John Poole-Warren, Mr Rupert Prichard, Ms Annette Priestley, Major General Andrew Pringle, Ms Victoria Prentis MP, Ms Jo Prosser, Ms Ellie Reeves MP, Ms Shona Rogers, His Honour John Samuels KC, Mr and Mrs William Shipton, Mr Gerald Slocock, Mr and Mrs Sam Smith, Lieutenant Colonel Simon Stanford-Tuck, Mr Jonathan Staniforth, Mr John Stein, Mr Alastair Stewart, Ms Alice Sumption, Mr Gideon Sumption, Mr Andrew Sutcliffe KC, Mr Foster Swetenham, Mrs Charlie Taylor, Mr John Taylor, Mr Simon Toynbee, Mr Mark Tress, Ms Camilla Tress, Mr Timothy Villiers-Smith,Major General Charles Vyvyan, Mr Richard Ward, Mr Charlie Weinberg, Mr Leslie Welling, Brigadier Hugh Willing, Mr Mike Wood MP with many more friends, former colleagues and organisations having connection with Lord Ramsbotham.

In Memoriam - Private

BLAKE
Charles Graham Blake. Died 24th Sept 2020. So much missed. His warm and generous spirit lives on. Remembered everyday with untiring love. Alison

Legal Notices

THE HIGH COURT COMMERCIAL 2023 / 171 COS IN THE MATTER OF GLANTUS HOLDINGS PLC - and - AND IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 2014 - and - AND IN THE MATTER OF THE IRISH TAKE OVER PANEL ACT 1997 - and - AND IN THE MATTER OF A PROPOSAL FOR A SCHEME OF ARRANGEMENT PURSUANT TO PART 9, CHAPTER 1 OF THE COMPANIES ACT 2014

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a meeting (the "Scheme Meeting") of the shareholders (the "Scheme Shareholders") of Glantus Holdings plc ("Glantus") subject to a proposed scheme of arrangement between Glantus and the Scheme Shareholders under Chapter 1 of Part 9 of the Companies Act 2014, as amended (the "2014 Act") to effect the acquisition by Genesis Bidco Limited of the entire issued and to be issued share capital of Glantus (the "Scheme") was held at offices of DAC Beachcroft Dublin at Three Haddington Buildings, Percy Place, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4, D04 T253, Ireland on 13 September 2023 at 11 a.m. for the purpose of considering, and voting on, a resolution (the "Scheme Resolution") proposing that the Scheme, in its original form or with or subject to modification(s), addition(s) or condition(s) approved or imposed by the High Court be agreed. The Scheme Shareholders passed the Scheme Resolution at the Scheme Meeting without modification.

NOTICE IS HEREBY FURTHER GIVEN that consequent upon an application made to it by Glantus on 19 September 2023 the High Court of Ireland directed that an application by Glantus for an order pursuant to section 453(2) of the 2014 Act sanctioning the Scheme (the "Application") shall be heard by the High Court of Ireland at 11:00 a.m. on 10 October 2023 at the Four Courts, Inns Quay, Dublin 7. The High Court of Ireland has directed that the Application shall be conducted as a hybrid application and it will therefore take place physically and remotely.
Dated: 19 September 2023
DAC Beachcroft Dublin, Three Haddington Buildings, Percy Place, Dublin 4, D04 T253, Ireland Solicitors for Glantus Holdings plc
NOTE: The High Court has directed that any person who intends to appear at the application must notify Glantus' solicitors (DAC Beachcroft Dublin of the above address) in writing (ref: GLA126) not later than 5 p.m. (Irish Time) on 5 October 2023 of that person's intention to appear at the Application and must serve any affidavit evidence on which that person intends to rely on Glantus' solicitors by that time and date. Copies of the pleadings in the Application and/or of remote connection details for the Application can be obtained from Glantus' solicitors by emailing glantus@dacbeachcroft.com.

ANIMAL FARM ADVENTURE PARK ZOO LICENSE NOTICE
We at Animal Farm Adventure Park, Red Road, Berrow, TA8 2RW, hereby give notice that in no less than 2 months after the publication of this notice we intend to make the application to Sedgemoor Council for a licence to operate a proposed zoo. A written notice of the intention to make the application for the zoo licence, giving details about the proposed zoo, has been sent to said Council. This may be inspected, free of charge, by the office of the Council at Animal Farm Adventure Park between the hours of 10am and 5pm.

EROS NEWCO LIMITED
(Company Number: 13807078)
Principal Trading Address: c/o BDO LLP, 5 Temple Square, Temple Street, Liverpool, L2 5RH
Malcolm Cohen and Matthew Chadwick of BDO LLP, 55 Baker Street, London, W1U 7EU were appointed Joint Liquidators of the Company on 11 September 2023. Creditors of the Company are required, on or before the 27 October 2023 to send in their full names, their addresses and descriptions, full particulars of their debts or claims and the names and addresses of their solicitors (if any) to the Joint Liquidators, and, if so required by notice, to come in and prove their debts or claims at such time and place as shall be specified in such notice. Note: Please note that this is a solvent liquidation. The directors of the Company have made a declaration of solvency and it is expected that all creditors will be paid in full.
Further details contact: Pauline Durrant, Tel: 020 7486 5888, Email: pauline.durrant@bdo.co.uk, Reference: 00419325.
Malcolm Cohen, Joint Liquidator
Dated: 18 September 2023

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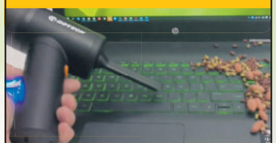
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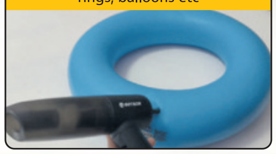
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Today Sunny intervals, but rather cloudy with scattered showers, blustery in the north. Max 19C (66F), min 0C (32F)

Around Britain

Key: b=bright, c=cloud, d=drizzle, pc=partly cloudy du=dull, f=fair, fg=fog, h=hail, m=mist, r=rain, sh=showers, sl=sleet, sn=snow, s=sun, t=thunder *=previous day **=data not available

	Temp C midday yesterday		Rain mm 24 hrs to 5pm yesterday	Sun hr*
Aberdeen	14	B	0.0	6.5
Aberporth	13	S	1.8	2.5
Anglesey	15	C	0.2	5.0
Aviemore	11	D	2.0	4.6
Barnstaple	15	C	0.4	**
Bedford	17	PC	25.4	**
Belfast	13	PC	1.2	4.3
Birmingham	15	PC	0.0	**
Bournemouth	16	R	27.6	0.0
Bridlington	17	S	2.0	**
Bristol	16	PC	1.0	0.0
Camborne	15	R	0.6	1.2
Cardiff	16	PC	2.8	0.4
Edinburgh	15	C	1.6	6.9
Eskdalemuir	13	PC	0.4	1.0
Glasgow	12	R	0.4	4.4
Hereford	12	R	6.6	**
Herstmonceux	17	PC	11.2	0.0
Ipswich	15	S	20.2	1.9
Isle of Man	14	PC	0.0	8.7
Isle of Wight	17	PC	14.8	**
Jersey	17	C	0.0	1.2
Keswick	15	R	1.2	**
Kinloss	14	C	1.0	6.8
Leeds	14	PC	0.0	**
Lerwick	12	C	3.0	0.0
Leuchars	15	PC	0.0	5.9
Lincoln	16	R	3.2	0.0
Liverpool	16	S	0.0	**
London	18	PC	26.6	0.3
Lyneham	16	C	8.4	0.0
Manchester	16	B	0.0	1.6
Margate	15	PC	2.4	1.6
Milford Haven	16	PC	1.2	**
Newcastle	14	C	0.0	**
Nottingham	15	PC	0.6	0.0
Orkney	12	C	5.2	5.4
Oxford	17	PC	36.6	**
Plymouth	15	C	1.8	**
Portland	18	C	7.6	**
Scilly, St Mary's	16	PC	6.4	**
Shoreham	19	PC	18.8	0.4
Shrewsbury	16	PC	1.0	1.2
Snowdonia	11	R	5.0	**
Southend	16	S	4.2	0.3
South Uist	12	C	20.8	**
Stornoway	12	R	12.4	2.4
Tiree	11	R	14.0	1.3
Whitehaven	13	R	3.8	2.0
Wick	11	R	13.0	**
Yeovilton	16	R	2.8	0.0

The world

All readings local midday yesterday

Alicante	29	S	Madeira	26	PC
Amsterdam	15	R	Madrid	16	D
Athens	29	S	Malaga	28	S
Auckland	21	S	Mallorca	27	PC
Bahrain	36	S	Malta	30	S
Bangkok	32	PC	Melbourne	15	B
Barbados	31	SH	Mexico City	25	PC
Barcelona	25	PC	Miami	33	B
Beijing	25	S	Milan	21	SH
Beirut	29	PC	Mombasa	30	B
Belgrade	29	S	Montreal	18	PC
Berlin	27	S	Moscow	19	PC
Bermuda	28	SH	Mumbai	30	**
Bordeaux	18	R	Munich	25	S
Brussels	16	R	Nairobi	27	B
Bucharest	29	S	Naples	27	S
Budapest	22	S	New Orleans	31	PC
Buenos Aires	17	D	New York	24	PC
Cairo	31	PC	Nice	22	B
Calcutta	27	**	Nicosia	30	PC
Canberra	16	C	Oslo	17	SH
Cape Town	17	PC	Paris	15	R
Chicago	26	B	Perth	23	S
Copenhagen	21	S	Prague	20	PC
Corfu	28	PC	Reykjavik	9	S
Delhi	36	**	Riga	22	S
Dubai	40	S	Rio de Janeiro	28	PC
Dublin	13	PC	Riyadh	39	S
Faro	23	D	Rome	28	PC
Florence	28	PC	San Francisco	21	PC
Frankfurt	23	S	Santiago	16	B
Geneva	23	PC	São Paulo	27	S
Gibraltar	24	B	Seoul	22	S
Helsinki	19	PC	Seychelles	30	PC
Hong Kong	32	PC	Singapore	31	PC
Honolulu	30	PC	St Petersburg	19	B
Istanbul	24	S	Stockholm	19	S
Jerusalem	31	PC	Sydney	19	PC
Johannesburg	26	S	Tel Aviv	31	PC
Kuala Lumpur	30	PC	Tenerife	28	PC
Kyiv	**	**	Tokyo	28	SH
Lanzarote	28	PC	Vancouver	16	PC
Las Palmas	28	PC	Venice	24	PC
Lima	18	DU	Vienna	26	PC
Lisbon	22	PC	Warsaw	26	S
Los Angeles	22	B	Washington	26	B
Luxor	34	S	Zurich	23	S

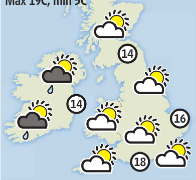
Five days ahead

Mainly dry tomorrow, otherwise unsettled with rain and showers, strong winds at times

Tomorrow

Sunny spells and staying dry across England, Wales and Scotland. Rain will spread into Ireland during the afternoon.

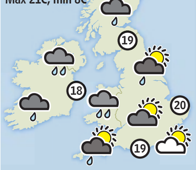
Max 19C, min 5C



Sunday

Staying dry across central and southeastern England with sunny spells. Elsewhere it will be windy with showery rain, perhaps heavy at times in Ireland and western Britain.

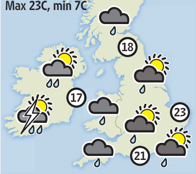
Max 21C, min 8C



Monday

Windy with rain and heavy showers at times across Ireland and western Britain. Drier in central and eastern England, although rather cloudy with a few showers possible.

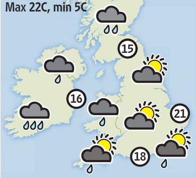
Max 23C, min 7C



Tuesday

A blustery day with showers or spells of rain in Ireland and western Britain. The chance of rain in the southeast during the morning, but otherwise mostly dry with sunny spells.

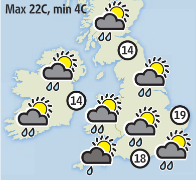
Max 22C, min 5C



Wednesday

Mainly dry with sunny spells in eastern areas at first, but otherwise a large area of rain and strong winds will move from Ireland and western Britain into eastern areas through the day.

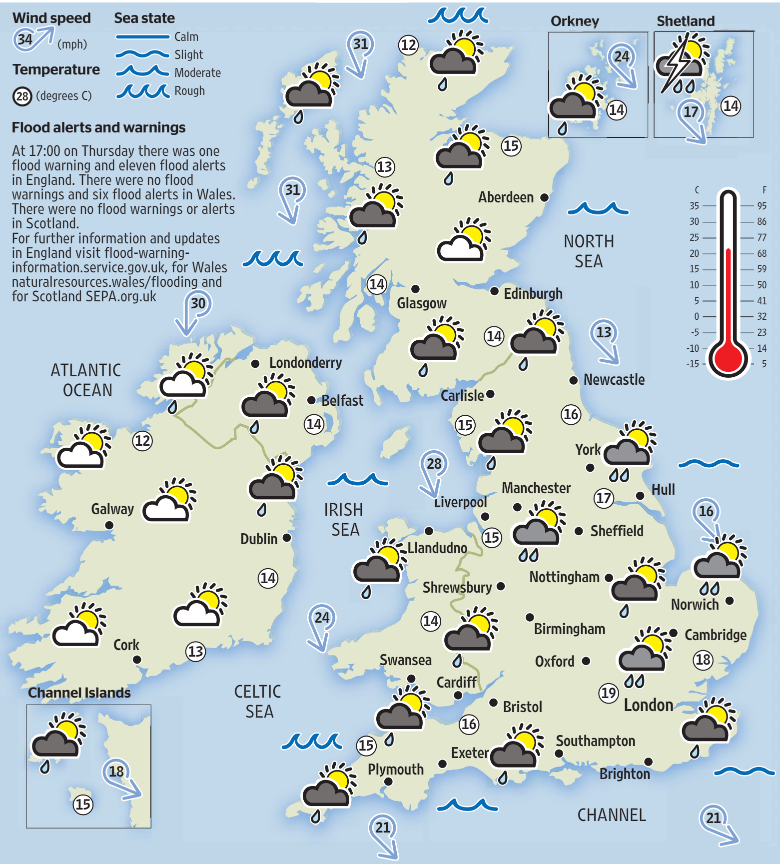
Max 22C, min 4C



The Times weather page is provided by WeatherQuest

Flood alerts and warnings

At 17:00 on Thursday there was one flood warning and eleven flood alerts in England. There were no flood warnings and six flood alerts in Wales. There were no flood warnings or alerts in Scotland.
For further information and updates in England visit flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk, for Wales naturalresources.wales/flooding and for Scotland SEPA.org.uk

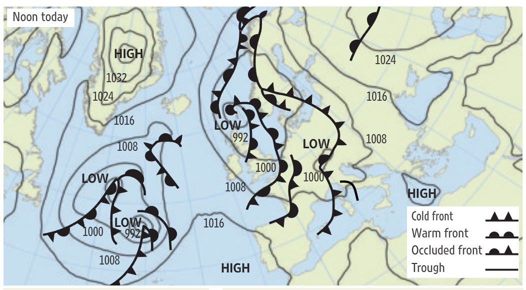


General situation: A mixture of sunny spells and scattered showers.
London, SE Eng, E Anglia: Early cloud and rain clearing eastwards to leave sunny spells, but scattered showers will develop in the afternoon, some heavy. Moderate west to northwesterly winds. Maximum 19C (66F), minimum 6C (43F).
Cen S Eng, Midlands, E Eng, NE Eng, Cen N Eng: Dry with sunny spells in the morning. Turning cloudier with scattered showers in the afternoon, some heavy. Moderate west to northwesterly winds. Maximum 18C (64F), minimum 2C (36F).
Wales, SW Eng, Channel Is, IoM, NW Eng, Lake District, SW Scotland, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee, Borders: A few sunny intervals, otherwise a rather cloudy day with scattered showers, heavy at times. Moderate northwesterly winds, fresh to strong near the coast. Maximum 17C (63F), minimum 1C (34F).
Aberdeen, Cen Highland, Moray Firth, NW Scotland, NE Scotland, N Isles, Argyll: A mostly cloudy and blustery day with showers or longer spells of rain at times. Fresh to strong northwesterly winds. Maximum 15C (59F), minimum 0C (32F).
Republic of Ireland, N Ireland: Scattered showers in northern and eastern areas at first, otherwise mostly dry with sunny spells. Fresh northwesterly winds, strong near the coast. Maximum 15C (59F), minimum 2C (36F).

Tides

Tidal predictions.
Heights in metres

Today		Ht		Ht
Aberdeen	06:26	3.7	18:55	3.6
Avonmouth	--:--	--	12:06	10.8
Belfast	04:07	3.2	16:24	3.1
Cardiff	11:44	10.1	--:--	--
Devonport	10:36	4.7	23:04	4.5
Dover	03:32	6.0	15:59	5.9
Dublin	--:--	--	--:--	--
Falmouth	09:39	4.4	22:14	4.2
Greenock	05:14	3.3	17:35	3.1
Harwich	04:37	3.5	16:51	3.6
Holyhead	03:04	4.8	15:37	4.7
Hull	11:24	6.3	23:46	6.0
Leith	07:46	4.8	20:13	4.6
Liverpool	03:42	8.0	16:15	7.8
London Bridge	06:35	6.1	19:02	6.3
Lowestoft	02:26	2.3	14:47	2.3
Milford Haven	11:06	5.7	23:34	5.5
Morecambe	03:54	8.0	16:27	7.7
Newhaven	03:42	5.7	16:05	5.6
Newquay	10:01	5.8	22:29	5.6
Oban	10:33	3.1	22:43	3.0
Penzance	09:32	4.7	21:56	4.5
Portsmouth	04:15	4.1	16:43	4.1
Shoreham	03:46	5.4	16:12	5.2
Southampton	03:32	4.1	06:37	3.7
Swansea	11:03	7.7	23:32	7.4
Tees	08:44	4.8	21:20	4.6
Weymouth	11:18	1.6	23:50	1.4



Synoptic situation

A complex area of low pressure to the northeast of Scotland will continue to bring unsettled conditions to many areas. Scattered showers will be widespread, perhaps heavy and thundery at times during the afternoon. A ridge of higher pressure will move in from the west later bringing drier conditions to Ireland and western Britain later in the day.

Highs and lows

24hrs to 5pm yesterday

Warmest: Pershore, 20.9C
Coldest: Cairngorm, 1.6C
Wettest: Achnagart, Inverness-shire, 62.6mm
Sunniest: Ronaldsway Airport, Isle of Man, 8.7hrs*

Sun and moon

For Greenwich
Sun rises: 06.45
Sun sets: 18.59
Moon rises: 15.29
Moon sets: 22.05
Full Moon: September 29th

Hours of darkness

Aberdeen	19:39-06:25
Belfast	19:54-06:40
Birmingham	19:37-06:25
Cardiff	19:42-06:30
Exeter	19:43-06:31
Glasgow	19:47-06:34
Liverpool	19:42-06:29
London	19:30-06:18
Manchester	19:39-06:26
Newcastle	19:36-06:23
Norwich	19:24-06:12
Penzance	19:51-06:39
Sheffield	19:35-06:23

Weather Eye
Paul Simons



Rishi Sunak has pledged not to impose "unacceptable costs" on households in the drive to hit the government's net zero target for greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. Among the new measures outlined was exempting a fifth of households from the plan to phase out the sale of new gas boilers from 2035 (News, September 20).

Domestic heating accounts for about 14 per cent of UK greenhouse gas emissions, and relies heavily on fossil fuel heating systems, mainly gas boilers. The government has been promoting a switch from boilers to heat pumps, although Sir Jacob Rees-Mogg, the former minister, has long been a sceptic. "Heat pumps don't work in many circumstances," he told BBC Radio's *World at One* (September 20).

A common misconception is that heat pumps stop working in cold weather. But a study published this year by Oxford University and the Regulatory Assistance Project, *Coming in from the cold: Heat pump efficiency at low temperatures*, showed that heat pumps outperform oil and gas heating at well below 0C. The paper, published in the journal Joule, was based on research from studies across Europe, North America and China. In fact, heat pumps work efficiently in countries with climates much colder than in the UK.

Heat pumps run on electricity and generally use energy three times more efficiently than gas boilers, and if the electricity is generated from renewable energy sources, the emissions are reduced to zero.

Last year, when Rees-Mogg was business secretary, he advocated a switch to hydrogen gas for domestic heating. Hydrogen doesn't give off CO_2 when it burns, but studies showed that it was far less efficient and more costly than alternatives such as heat pumps. Most of the world's hydrogen is manufactured using fossil fuels. Hydrogen can only be considered "green" when electricity is generated from renewable sources to split water into hydrogen and oxygen, and this is a very inefficient process.

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Christmas in Poland is celebrated in style from late November and with its castle skyline and cobbled streets, it truly is a Christmas card come to life, looking particularly stunning at night. You'll discover Krakow's Christmas market in the heart of the Old Town, enjoying a visit to Krakow's Wodka Museum along the way. You'll also experience a traditional dinner with live music and an included guided visit to the extraordinary Wielizca Salt Mines.

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Sport

Ingebrigtsen adds 'beer mile' title to collection



Jakob Ingebrigtsen may have sounded like a bitter man after losing to Great Britain's Josh Kerr at last month's World Championships, but it now seems Norway's track titan prefers a lighter shade of ale (Rick Broadbent writes).

The 1,500m Olympic champion and world silver medallist clocked a time of 5min 22.43sec to win a "beer mile" race at home in Norway as part of his stag do. The official rules of the event — yes, they exist — state runners must drink one beer in the "transition zone" on each of the four laps, and the drink must be no less than 355ml and have at least a 5 per cent alcohol content. It is unclear if the 23-year-old's hydration strategy met these rules on Tuesday, but his brother Kristoffer's Strava post showed the two-times 5,000m world champion lining up with his friends and his running brothers, alongside a table of Sierra Nevada Pale Ale and Corona. The post stated the distance was 1.6km with 113 calories burned. Clearly, some were also added.

In a message, Kristoffer confirmed it was a beer mile but added: "No new world record unfortunately. Became too heavy with the drinking."

Pettersen eyes Solheim history

Golf
Tom Kershaw Málaga

The Solheim Cup has always had a propensity for flashpoints and fireworks. Annika Sorenstam's disallowed chip-in after she played out of turn in 2000 and Dottie Pepper's inadvertent act of mutiny when she branded her successors "choking, freaking dogs" on a hot mic in 2007 spring to mind, but nobody has embodied the competition's fierce nature quite like Suzann Pettersen, from the acrimony of "gimme-gate" in 2015 to glorious redemption when she holed the winning putt in 2019.

The expectation had been that Europe's captain would imbue her team with that same intensity this week, but it is indicative of the Norwegian's confidence that she has cut a relaxed figure in Spain. "We've had non-stop music blaring [in practice rounds]," Gemma Dryburgh, one of three European rookies, said. "All sorts of stuff. Norwegian. Swedish. Regular pop stuff. Some oldies. A real mix. I feel like she's done a great job of pumping us up."

That relaxed air will inevitably turn claustrophobic when the crowds pour through the gates at Finca Cortesin in Málaga this morning, but Europe have been radiating self-belief as they bid to win a third successive Solheim Cup for the first time in their history. "I don't have to tell the players to be up for it," Pettersen, 42, said. "It's great to have a possible dream to chase, but it's not something I need to push on to them."

Although the Americans are — as is tradition — stronger in terms of world ranking, Pettersen is delighted with Europe's eight automatic qualifiers. Céline Boutier won her first major on home soil at the Evian Championship this summer and will continue her partnership with Georgia Hall after the pair went unbeaten in 2021, while Charley Hull is in terrific form and has a formidable matchplay record since making a triumphant Solheim Cup debut as a teenager a decade ago.

Linn Grant and Maja Stark are rookies in name but the Swedish pair have been close friends since secondary school and were given a vote of confidence by Pettersen in being chosen to lead off in the morning foursomes. "I did see an interview with Maja where she said it'd be stupid if I didn't play them together, so I thought, 'Why not?'," Pettersen said.

Her only real gamble has been opting for experience with her captain's picks. Caroline Hedwall went 5-0 in 2013 but has played only two majors in the past three years. Emily Pedersen's form has also failed to convince but she left Ohio with a 3-1 record in 2021 and will reprise a successful partnership with Hull.

The US have approached this Solheim Cup with a clean slate. Stacy Lewis, 38, is the youngest captain in the competition's history and only one of her four vice-captains, Angela Stanford, has previously held the role. That inexperience is reflected just as starkly in Lewis's team, which features five rookies and not a single player aged over 30. Lexi Thompson, who will hit the opening tee shot today, has twice been on the winning side but has been mired in a miserable slump and missed eight cuts in her past 11 events.

Molinari: We now have very good options for foursomes

CONTINUED FROM BACK

denied it had been a problem, but Europe lost both foursomes sessions 3-1 and Donald did not want to encounter any such surprises in Rome. Edoardo Molinari, one of the vice-captains, said: "We sent a few players other players' balls to get feedback. Some of the feedback was great, some horrible, and we had to change a few things.

"I think the ball is the biggest thing in foursomes. Players need a ball they are comfortable with. Of 12 players, off the top of my head, only three play with exactly the same ball. The rest are different brands or different versions of the same balls. The differences can be huge. Some players don't mind changing ball for 18 holes and can adapt very quickly, but others say there's no chance they can play that ball for two shots."

Europe's final 12 use four different brands and six models, and the decision to practise with unfamiliar balls shows the level of planning for this match.

"I think it's pretty new [doing this]," Molinari said. "I was not involved in the last Ryder Cup but I knew there was an issue with the ball 48 hours before. So we decided to send balls out. Some pairings look great on paper, but the balls are so different that none of them could switch. It's been a long and taxing process, more than I would ever have imagined, but now we have very good possibilities. We have a few alternatives if things don't go to plan on day one."

Balls used by Team Europe

Rory McIlroy, Tommy Fleetwood, Bob MacIntyre TaylorMade TP5x
Tyrrell Hatton, Matt Fitzpatrick, Ludvig Aberg Titleist Pro V1x
Jon Rahm, Nicolai Hojgaard Callaway Chrome Soft X
Viktor Hovland, Justin Rose Titleist Pro V1
Shane Lowry Srixon Z Star XV
Sepp Straka Srixon Z Star Diamond



Offer ends 5 October 2023. Sky Sports Golf for £15 extra pm for 12 months with 31 day rolling contract (then £18). Prices may change during this period. Requires Sky Q: 18 month minimum term. Standard set-up: £20 for new customers; up to £49 for existing customers. Subject to status. Upfront payment may be required. Offer not available with any other offers. Further terms apply. Information correct at 15 August. For more information go to https://www.sky.com/tv/sports.

Rock Melody looks primed to strike in Bronze Cup

Rock Melody is fancied to defy top weight in the Virgin Bet Ayr Bronze Cup (3.25) today (Rob Wright writes).

This filly followed two wins at Musselburgh in the summer with a close third to Ramiro — off a 1lb higher mark than she races off here — in a big field over this course and distance in July.

She was not disgraced in classier races on her next three starts before finishing second to Princess Karine back over five furlongs at Musselburgh last time.

Rock Melody finished strongly there, just unable to collar the front-running winner, and a return to six furlongs here should suit.

Jim Goldie, her shrewd trainer who is based just north of Ayr, has won this cavalry charge twice in the past ten years. He can strike again.

Ayr

Rob Wright

1.15 Roman Secret
1.45 Media Shooter
2.15 Beautiful Diamond
2.50 Queen Me
3.25 Rock Melody (nap)
4.00 Yorkstone (nb)
4.35 Zumaaty
5.10 Optician

Going: good to soft, good in places
Draw: no advantage — **Racing TV**

1.15 Nursery (2-Y-O: £7,851: 7f) (6 runners)

1 (3) 24622 **MISS ROBERTS** 20 E Walker 9-9 **S Osborne**
2 (1) 4104 **ELINOR DASHWOOD** 20 K Ryan 9-7 **T Eaves**
3 (6) 12 **LUNAR STREETS** 21 E Dunlop 9-2 **P Mulrennan**
4 (2) 105 **NEVER FEAR** 85 C Johnston 9-0 **J Hart**
5 (5) 236 **ROMAN SECRET** 25 R Fahey 8-10 **C Hardie**
6 (4) 22614 **BUTTERCROSS FLYER** 9 (D) Craig Lidster 8-9 **W Pyle (5)**

9-4 Lunar Streets, 5-2 Miss Roberts, 4-1 Elinor Dashwood, 7-1 Roman Secret, 8-1 Buttercross Flyer, 10-1 Never Fear.

Rob Wright's choice: Roman Secret has been unsuited by a slow early pace on her past two starts **Danger:** Never Fear

1.45 Nursery (2-Y-O: £9,277: 6f) (10)

1 (2) 2110 **GOVERNMENT CALL** 13 (P,D) E J-Houghton 9-9 **Doubtful**
2 (3) 24212 **TWO TRIBES** 20 (B,BF) R Spencer 9-8 **P Mulrennan**
3 (8) 1033 **LOVE BILLY BOY** 16 (BF) R Hannon 9-8 **H Crouch**
4 (4) 10615 **FLACCIANELLO** 8 (D) R Fahey 9-5 **Oisin Orr**
5 (5) 2100 **SERGEANT WILKO** 77 K Ryan 9-4 **T Eaves**
6 (1) 12 **MASTER OF MY FATE** 16 J J Quinn 9-4 **J Hart**
7 (9) 611 **ALMARADA PRINCE** 17 (D) Craig Lidster 9-4 **S James**
8 (10) 416 **MEDIA SHOOTER** 29 (D) K R Burke 8-13 **D Tudhope**
9 (7) 66431 **SAYIDH KINGMAN** 44 (D) C Johnston 8-13 **J Fanning**
10 (6) 641 **BILL'S BAAR** 17 (D) A Keatley 8-11 **D Costello**

5-1 Almarada Prince, 11-2 Flaccianello, 6-1 Love Billy Boy, Master Of My Fate, Two Tribes, 7-1 Media Shooter, Bill's Baar, 8-1 Sayidh Kingman.

Wright choice: Media Shooter was a good sixth in valuable sales race at York **Dangers:** Almarada Prince, Love Billy Boy

2.15 Listed Stakes (2-Y-O: £20,132: 5f) (7)

1 (6) 31104 **BOMBAY BAZAAR** 25 (D) R Fahey 9-5 **Oisin Orr**
2 (7) 105 **MON NA SLIEVE** 27 (D) K Ryan 9-5 **T Eaves**
3 (2) 1522 **PUROSANGUE** 27 (BF,D) A Balding 9-5 **P J McDonald**
4 (1) 31033 **TOCA MADERA** 50 B Meehan 9-5 **S Osborne**
5 (5) 01046 **ALFA MOONSTONE** 26 (D) Craig Lidster 9-0 **S James**
6 (4) 135 **BEAUTIFUL DIAMOND** 29 (D) K R Burke 9-0 **C Lee**
7 (3) 41 **QUEEN'S GUARD** 44 M Bell 9-0 **D Tudhope**

13-8 Purosangue, 9-4 Beautiful Diamond, 6-1 Toca Madera, 8-1 Queen's Guard, 10-1 Bombay Bazaar, Mon Na Slieve, 50-1 Alfa Moonstone.

Wright choice: Beautiful Diamond was far from disgraced when fifth in the Lowther at York **Danger:** Purosangue

2.50 Listed Stakes (£26,654: 5f 110yd) (13)

1 (7) 32106 **PERDIKA** 12 (P,T,D) G Boughey 3-9-3 **P J McDonald**
2 (9) 00340 **GALE FORCE MAYA** 27 (B,CD) M Dods 7-9-2 **C Beasley**
3 (10) 23-34 **PINK CRYSTAL** 70 (D) W Haggas 4-9-2 **J Hart**
4 (13) -3310 **RUM COCKTAIL** 69 (D) E Walker 4-9-2 **S Osborne**
5 (2) 21222 **AUSSIE GIRL** 26 (D) J A Stack (Ire) 3-9-0 **J M Sheridan**
6 (3) 41532 **FUNNY STORY** 33 (D) R Beckett 3-9-0 **H Crouch**
7 (1) -3203 **MARINE WAVE** 30 (D) R Fahey 3-9-0 **Oisin Orr**
8 (4) 3-060 **QUEEN ME** 28 (D) K Ryan 3-9-0 **T Eaves**
9 (11) 40555 **RADIO GOO GOO** 30 (D) P Evans 3-9-0 **B Curtis**
10 (8) 56523 **SECRET ANGEL** 26 (D) K R Burke 3-9-0 **C Lee**
11 (5) 24040 **SILENT WORDS** 13 (D) K Ryan 3-9-0 **D Tudhope**
12 (6) 15210 **SOPHIA'S STARLIGHT** 29 (D) G Tuer 3-9-0 **S James**
13 (12) 04006 **SWEET HARMONY** 15 (V,D) R Spencer 3-9-0 **P Mulrennan**

9-2 Queen Me, 6-1 Pink Crystal, Funny Story, 7-1 Gale Force Maya, Aussie Girl, Marine Wave, 10-1 Perdika, Secret Angel.

Wright choice: Queen Me drops in class after struggling in the Nunthorpe **Dangers:** Pink Crystal, Gale Force Maya

3.25 Handicap (£18,039: 6f) (25)

1 (23) 33602 **ROCK MELODY** 5 (BF,D) J Goldie 4-9-12 **P Mulrennan**
2 (11) 42050 **MUSIC SOCIETY** 34 (CD) T Easterby 8-9-12 **D Allan**
3 (6) 32334 **ASCOT ADVENTURE** 6 (P,BF,D) D O'Meara 5-9-11 **B Curtis**
4 (9) 14241 **YAASER** 9 (C) J Goldie 5-9-11(5ex) **S Osborne**
5 (20) 11450 **NOVAK** 6 (CD) I Jardine 4-9-10 **W Pyle (5)**
6 (21) -0225 **HARRY'S HALO** 44 (T,D) K Frost 3-9-9 **B Sanderson (3)**
7 (16) 06013 **JORDAN ELECTRICS** 9 (CD) J Goldie 7-9-9(5ex) **J Fanning**
8 (24) 46202 **LITTLE MUDDY** 43 (CD) S Spencer 7-9-8 **D Swift**
9 (4) 05006 **GHATHANFAR** 13 (P,D) T Waggott 7-9-8 **C Beasley**
10 (2) 61100 **SHOW ME SHOW ME** 9 (V) R Fahey 6-9-7 **R Sexton (3)**
11 (7) 52643 **COLD STARE** 48 (P,T,BF,CD) D O'Meara 8-9-6 **D Tudhope**
12 (8) 00040 **CATCH CUNNINGHAM** 5 (P) K Ryan 4-9-5 **T Eaves**
13 (10) 21200 **BOROUGH** 1 (C) I Jardine 3-9-4 **Z Wheatley (5)**
14 (17) 00013 **B ASSOCIATES** 9 (BF,C,D) J Goldie 3-9-4(5ex) **H Crouch**
15 (1) 21264 **TRABAJO DETECHO** 9 (P,BF,D) R Fell & S Murray 3-9-3 **J Peate (3)**
16 (22) 0-660 **PHOENIX BEACH** 20 (D) R Fahey 4-9-3 **J Garritty**
17 (15) 45004 **WATER OF LEITH** 5 (CD) J Goldie 5-9-3 **S Gray**
18 (13) 62564 **ASADJUMEIRAH** 17 (T,V,D) A Brittain 5-9-3 **C Hardie**
19 (25) 02213 **AMERICAN AFFAIR** 1 (D) J Goldie 3-9-3(5ex) **Amie Waugh (5)**
20 (14) 00350 **BELLAGIO MAN** 48 (P,D) A Brittain 5-9-2 **H Russell**
21 (18) 01234 **KATS BOB** 4 (P,CD) I Jardine 5-9-2 **A Mullen**
22 (5) 00440 **AFTER JOHN** 27 (D) I Jardine 7-9-1 **S James**
23 (12) 15600 **SHALLOW HAL** 1 (V,CD) K R Burke 7-9-1 **C Lee**
24 (19) 13620 **SIR MAXI** 1 (BF,D) R Fahey 5-9-0 **Oisin Orr**
25 (3) 01600 **CLAIM THE STARS** 3 (T,D) T Easterby 4-8-11 **J Hart**

15-2 Sir Maxi, 8-1 Rock Melody, 10-1 Yaaser, 12-1 Ascot Adventure, American Affair, 14-1 Kats Bob, Jordan Electrics, Cold Stare.

Wright choice: Rock Melody should appreciate this return to six furlongs **Dangers:** Cold Stare, Asadjumeirah

4.00 Handicap (Div I: £4,187: 1m) (14)

1 (2) 21544 **COSMOS RAJ** 24 (P,BF,CD) D O'Meara 5-10-1 **D Tudhope**
2 (10) 00002 **BICEP** 9 G Tuer 4-10-0 **S James**
3 (13) 00300 **SOAMES FORSYTE** 5 (P) M Herrington 4-9-13 **T Eaves**
4 (14) 04340 **POL ROGER** 24 (P,D) M Dods 3-9-10 **C Lee**
5 (7) 4-605 **BIG BAD WOLF** 20 N Tinkler 3-9-9 **F McManoman**
6 (5) 44300 **CASSY O** 1 (B,CD) T Easterby 6-9-8 **D Fentiman**
7 (8) 02060 **KELPIE GREY** 111 J Goldie 3-9-8 **P Mulrennan**
8 (11) -5004 **PEMBROKESHIRE** 14 (H) I Jardine 3-9-8 **A Mullen**
9 (12) 42540 **ARKENSTAAR** 22 M Dods 3-9-6 **C Beasley**
10 (6) 35003 **GRACELANDS GIRL** 4 T Easterby 4-9-3 **D Allan**
11 (1) 35261 **YORKSTONE** 48 M & D Easterby 3-9-2 **Joanna Mason**
12 (9) -3146 **TIME TO RUMBLE** 1 (CD) R Fahey 4-8-13 **Oisin Orr**
13 (3) 51514 **RETIREMENT BECKONS** 17 (CD) Miss L Perratt 8-8-12 **J Peate (3)**
14 (4) 03046 **ZEBRA STAR** 41 (H) R M Smith 3-8-11 **J Hart**

9-2 Cosmos Raj, 5-1 Bicep, 7-1 Gracelands Girl, Yorkstone, 10-1 Arkenstaar, 12-1 Retirement Beckons, Pembrokeshire, Cassy O, Time To Rumble.

Wright choice: Yorkstone won in good style at Doncaster; should stay this trip **Dangers:** Cosmos Raj, Time To Rumble

4.35 Handicap (Div II: £4,187: 1m) (14)

1 (12) 52040 **DANDY MAESTRO** 43 (P,T,D) R Spencer 5-10-0 **J Hart**
2 (8) 00000 **TUSCAN** 20 (V) D O'Meara 4-9-13 **D Tudhope**
3 (13) 50653 **ALPINE SIERRA** 21 (CD) J Goldie 5-9-11 **J Fanning**
4 (9) 21132 **AYR POET** 22 (P,CD) J Goldie 8-9-10 **P Mulrennan**
5 (10) 15244 **DESTINED** 21 (P) M Dods 3-9-9 **C Beasley**
6 (4) 34220 **NO BARRIER** 41 (P) K Ryan 3-9-8 **T Eaves**
7 (5) 14130 **LITTLE TED** 1 (P,D) T Easterby 6-9-8 **D Allan**
8 (3) 20206 **TREMENDOUS TIMES** 21 M Dods 3-9-7 **C Lee**
9 (2) 04301 **END ZONE** 1 (B,C,D) R Fell & S Murray 6-9-11(5ex) **J Peate (3)**
10 (14) 50064 **CARLTON** 9 T Waggott 3-9-2 **W Pyle (5)**
11 (11) 00503 **ZUMAATY** 17 (CD) I Jardine 5-9-0 **B Curtis**
12 (6) 54133 **CHINESE SPIRIT** 6 (CD) Miss L Perratt 9-8-12 **R Sexton (3)**
13 (7) 00003 **ROGUE FORCE** 5 (D) R M Smith 5-8-11 **P Mathers**
14 (1) 06365 **TWO RIVERS** 11 (P,T) I Jardine 3-8-5 **A Mullen**

4-1 Ayr Poet, 11-2 Little Ted, 6-1 Alpine Sierra, 7-1 Destined, 10-1 Zumaaty, 12-1 Dandy Maestro, 14-1 Tuscan, No Barrier, Tremendous Times.

Wright choice: Zumaaty shaped better than the result suggests at Hamilton **Dangers:** Alpine Sierra, Carlton

5.10 Handicap (£4,527: 1m 5f) (12)

1 (1) 00660 **FAIRMAC** 27 (B,C) C Johnston 5-10-4 **J Fanning**
2 (4) 43124 **GLASSES UP** 23 (P,C) R M Smith 8-10-2 **B Curtis**
3 (2) -5342 **ANNANDALE** 27 (CD) I Jardine 5-9-12 **A Mullen**
4 (11) 02230 **BELLE OF ANNANDALE** J16 A Keatley 4-9-12 **W Pyle (5)**
5 (10) 30400 **CLANSMAN** 25 (CD) Liam Bailey 5-9-10 **D Tudhope**
6 (5) 16432 **BOBBY SHAFTOE** 6 (B,BF) J Goldie 5-9-7 **P Mulrennan**
7 (8) 42444 **GOLDEN VALOUR** 5 (V) R M Smith 7-9-4 **P Mathers**
8 (3) 20-26 **WELL PLANTED** J11 R M Smith 6-9-3 **P J McDonald**
9 (9) 21403 **LOCHNAVER** 10 (H) J Goldie 5-9-1 **Amie Waugh (5)**
10 (7) 52234 **VALLEY OF FLOWERS** 35 (H,CD) J Coward 5-9-1 **Joanna Mason**
11 (6) 50054 **CRYSTAL GUARD** 14 (B) I Jardine 5-8-13 **C Lee**
12 (12) 26464 **OPTICIAN** 17 (P) T Easterby 3-8-11 **D Allan**

9-2 Annandale, 6-1 Bobby Shaftoe, 7-1 Glasses Up, 8-1 Optician, Valley Of Flowers, Belle Of Annandale, 10-1 Fairmac, Lochnaver, Crystal Guard.

Wright choice: Optician did not get a clear run when a fair fourth at Ripon **Dangers:** Annandale, Crystal Guard

Kempton Park

Rob Wright

4.40 Grand Karat
5.15 Military Artist
5.45 Summer Of Love
6.15 Olympic Candle
6.45 Primeval
7.15 Born Ruler
7.45 Dee's Dream
8.15 Muy Muy Guapo

Going: standard to slow
Draw: 5f-1m, low numbers best — **Racing TV**

4.40 Novice Stakes (Div I: 2-Y-O: £5,346: 7f) (14)

1 (4) 0 **BEACH POINT** 22 W Knight 9-7 **N Callan**
2 (8) 0 **BLACKLION** 21 J Osborne 9-7 **N Currie**
3 (13) 0 **CRACKER STAR** 33 R Hughes 9-7 **J Mitchell**
4 (7) 4 **DARK VIPER** 14 R Hannon 9-7 **S M Levey**
5 (12) 56 **DAYLIGHT RANSOM** 8 M Loughnane 9-7 **B Loughnane**
6 (14) **ENCOURAGER** J Fanshawe 9-7 **D Muscutt**
7 (1) 53 **GRAND KARAT** 42 H & R Charlton 9-7 **R Kingscote**
8 (11) **IMPERIAL GUARD** A Balding 9-7 **O Murphy**
9 (10) **MILITARY LEADER** (T) C Appleby 9-7 **W Buick**
10 (3) **ORNE** J & T Gosden 9-7 **R Havlin**
11 (5) 00 **RUKAANA** 14 C Hills 9-7 **H Doyle**
12 (2) 5 **YAAJOOZ** 16 C Fellowes 9-7 **H Davies**
13 (6) 00 **ZINCHENKO** 44 J Portman 9-7 **T Whelan**
14 (9) **GARDEN VIEW** J Tate 9-2 **Rossa Ryan**

5-2 Military Leader, 4-1 Grand Karat, 5-1 Orne, 13-2 Imperial Guard, 10-1 Dark Viper, Encourager, 14-1 Garden View, 16-1 Cracker Star.

5.15 Novice Stakes (Div II: 2-Y-O: £5,346: 7f) (13)

1 (7) **AGE OF BAROQUE** C Appleby 9-7 **W Buick**
2 (3) **CHRISTIAN DAVID** R Hannon 9-7 **S M Levey**
3 (9) 5 **CITY OF DELIGHT** 14 D Menuisier 9-7 **K Strydom**
4 (1) 0 **DESERT RHAPSODY** 22 (H) S & E Crisford 9-7 **H Davies**
5 (13) 02 **EULACE PEACOCK** 44 A Balding 9-7 **O Murphy**
6 (8) 0 **FLAG CARRIER** 62 Harry Eustace 9-7 **G Wood**
7 (11) 0 **FOX LEGACY** 34 Sir M Stoute 9-7 **R Kingscote**
8 (2) 50 **LIVEANDLETLIVE** 10 W Muir & C Grassick 9-7 **C Shepherd**
9 (4) 4 **MILITARY ARTIST** 13 R Varian 9-7 **J Mitchell**
10 (5) 06 **PAGAN KING** 28 M Murphy & M Keady 9-7 **D Muscutt**
11 (12) **POP NOODLE** M Loughnane 9-7 **B Loughnane**
12 (6) 06 **ORBITAL** 9 Sir M Prescott 9-2 **L Morris**
13 (10) 00 **TRES CHIC** 24 J S Moore 9-2 **H Doyle**

15-8 Age Of Baroque, 9-4 Eulace Peacock, 8-1 City Of Delight, Christian David, 10-1 Liveandletlive, Military Artist, 12-1 Fox Legacy, 25-1 Flag Carrier, Desert Rhapsody.

5.45 Novice Stakes (£5,940: 1m) (10)

1 (8) 5-1 **WHISPERING WORDS** 49 (D) C Appleby 3-9-9 **W Buick**
2 (9) 03 **FRIEZE FRAME** 13 M Scudamore 4-9-6 **B Loughnane**
3 (5) **CARAT GOLD** D Shaw 3-9-2 **J Fisher (5)**
4 (6) **CATHAYA** (H) M Murphy & M Keady 3-9-2 **C Shepherd**
5 (2) 60 **ICE CREAM CASTLES** 69 H Main 3-9-2 **Gina Mangan (3)**
6 (10) 40 **MOUNTAIN FLOWER** 16 C Hills 3-9-2 **H Doyle**
7 (4) 56 **OPTIMAL SINN** 53 M Madgwick 3-9-2 **D Muscutt**
8 (3) **SUMMER OF LOVE** S bin Suroor 3-9-2 **R Kingscote**
9 (7) 35 **VELVET CRUSH** 22 (P,BF) J & T Gosden 3-9-2 **R Havlin**
10 (1) 642 **VENUS ROSEWATER** 14 (T) J & T Gosden 3-9-2 **O Murphy**

13-8 Whispering Words, 9-4 Venus Rosewater, 4-1 Velvet Crush, 6-1 Summer Of Love, 16-1 Frieze Frame, 25-1 Mountain Flower, 33-1 Carat Gold, 50-1 others.

6.15 Novice Stakes (2-Y-O: £15,462: 6f) (12)

1 (5) 31 **OLYMPIC CANDLE** 14 S bin Suroor 9-10 **O Murphy**
2 (1) 00 **BRIERY BOY** 27 Patrick Owens 9-4 **N Callan**
3 (9) 52 **DEBORA'S DREAM** 21 (BF) R Varian 9-4 **J Mitchell**
4 (6) 0 **EIGHTH ARMY** 21 A Watson 9-4 **H Doyle**
5 (3) **ENGINEER** (W) C Cox 9-4 **R Kingscote**
6 (2) 63 **JUNGLE MAC** 101 Jack Channon 9-4 **W Buick**
7 (4) **ROGUE FIGHTER** Tom Clover 9-4 **R Havlin**
8 (8) **SPLIT THE PROFIT** M Murphy & M Keady 9-4 **M Ghiani**
9 (12) 2 **SEAX** 14 G Scott 9-2 **C Shepherd**
10 (11) 4 **TSUNAMI SPIRIT** 18 K P De Foy 9-2 **D Muscutt**
11 (7) 40 **RULING SOVEREIGN** 27 G Scott 8-13 **B Loughnane**
12 (10) 0 **PRISCILLA'S JOY** 9 P McBride 8-9 **A Farragher**

3-1 Olympic Candle, 7-2 Debora's Dream, 5-1 Seax, 6-1 Jungle Mac, 8-1 Tsunami Spirit, 12-1 Engineer, Eighth Army, 16-1 Ruling Sovereign.

6.45 Handicap (£6,281: 7f) (7)

1 (5) 21110 **WILD SIDE** 85 (BF,D) G Boughey 3-9-12 **W Buick**
2 (7) 331- **VERMILION** 363 (D) A Balding 3-9-9 **O Murphy**
3 (2) 00400 **MOTTISFONT** 29 (V,D) H Morrison 3-9-8 **H Doyle**
4 (4) 03606 **ALGHEED** 168 (D) M Loughnane 5-9-8 **L Morris**
5 (6) 22101 **RAJINDRI** 30 (CD) Tom Clover 3-9-6 **H Davies**
6 (3) 11 **PRIMEVAL** 40 H & R Charlton 3-9-6 **Rossa Ryan**
7 (1) 25416 **CLOUD COVER** 6 (D) J Tate 3-9-0 **N Callan**

2-1 Primeval, 7-2 Vermilion, Rajindri, 13-2 Wild Side, 10-1 Cloud Cover, Algheed, 16-1 Mottisfont.

7.15 Handicap (£4,187: 1m 3f) (12)

1 (6) 51464 **MASQOOL** 20 (C) H Evans 5-10-0 **J Leavy (7)**
2 (8) 31031 **BORN RULER** 7 Sir M Prescott 3-10-0(6ex) **L Morris**
3 (3) 2-440 **ZAIN FARHH** 28 (H) P Webber 4-9-12 **Rossa Ryan**
4 (2) 00230 **DOWN TO THE KID** 25 (BF) Alice Haynes 4-9-12 **D Keenan**
5 (12) 2-515 **JACK SPAROWE** 35 J Butler 4-9-10 **N Callan**
6 (7) 16031 **WADACRE GOMEZ** 45 C Johnston 3-9-9 **F Norton**
7 (4) 63550 **MYTHICAL GUEST** 24 G Margarson 3-9-8 **T P Queally**
8 (11) 6-000 **MHAJIM** 37 C Banham 4-9-7 **J Haynes**
9 (5) 3-144 **PABLO PRINCE** 181 K Jewell 5-9-6 **R Kingscote**
10 (10) -0400 **SOCIALLY SHADY** 32 J & S Best 6-9-5 **J Quinn**
11 (1) 50-61 **PINK JAZZ** 230 (C) J Butler 6-9-4 **G Wood**
12 (9) 50155 **FRAVANCO** 34 M Madgwick 4-9-4 **D Muscutt**

5-2 Born Ruler, 4-1 Wadacre Gomez, 11-2 Jack Sparowe, 6-1 Pink Jazz, 8-1 Pablo Prince, 12-1 Masqool, Down To The Kid, 16-1 Fravanco, Zain Farhh.

7.45 Handicap (£3,140: 1m 4f) (14)

1 (13) 34311 **NIVELLE'S MAGIC** 21 (D) S Earle 4-9-9 **A Keeley (3)**
2 (2) -2005 **BOBBY KENNEDY** 44 (D) D Coakley 5-9-9 **O Murphy**
3 (5) 00520 **CHEERS BABE** 37 I Williams 4-9-9 **R Kingscote**
4 (12) 54003 **SILVER BUBBLE** 37 (V,D) G Kelleway 5-9-7 **B Loughnane**
5 (11) 62564 **HILL STATION** J21 (B) Dr R Newland 4-9-6 **H Davies**
6 (6) 02031 **DEE'S DREAM** 11 (D) M Murphy & M Keady 3-9-6(6ex) **C Shepherd**
7 (9) 62643 **TRUSTY SCOUT** 29 (H,D) D Shaw 5-9-5 **L Morris**
8 (7) 21006 **SAVOY BROWN** 37 (CD) M Attwater 7-9-4 **W Carson**
9 (4) 0-064 **CLENCHED** 30 (B) J Feilden 3-9-2 **D Hogan**
10 (14) 060 **LARKHILL** 17 (B) W Jarvis 3-9-2 **N Callan**
11 (10) 23000 **DESTINADO** 18 (D) A Carroll 5-9-2 **H Doyle**
12 (8) 40-04 **CORNISH STORM** 79 W Kittow 4-9-1 **Rossa Ryan**
13 (1) 22246 **ICONIC MOVER** 23 P Phelan 5-9-1 **P Bradley (3)**
14 (3) 40550 **IREZUMI** 39 (B) J Boyle 3-8-13 **C Bennett**

3-1 Nivelle's Magic, 7-2 Dee's Dream, 7-1 Silver Bubble, 8-1 Cornish Storm, 10-1 Hill Station, Trusty Scout, 12-1 Bobby Kennedy, Cheers Babe.

8.15 Handicap (£3,140: 6f) (12)

1 (7) 21116 **SYMPATHISE** 56 (H,T,BF,D) V Dartnall 5-9-9 **Rhiain Ingram (3)**
2 (10) -0000 **MARSH LOCK** 21 (B) Ollie Sangster 3-9-9 **T Whelan**
3 (8) 60425 **GUITEAU** 19 D F Davis 3-9-9 **O Lewis (7)**
4 (6) 02430 **FIRST COMPANY** 16 (BF) M Loughnane 5-9-9 **B Loughnane**
5 (2) 03466 **MOONLIGHT DREAMER** 16 R Cowell 3-9-9 **M Ghiani**
6 (4) 30500 **NO SPEED LIMIT** 19 (P,T,D) G Baker 8-9-8 **L Morris**
7 (3) 04602 **MUY MUY GUAPO** 7 S Dow 3-9-8 **P Bradley (3)**
8 (12) 04630 **ORIENTAL SPIRIT** 23 (T,BF,CD) W Kittow 5-9-8 **C Shepherd**
9 (1) 3-400 **LAS CUATRO** 91 J Butler 3-9-7 **Morgan Cole (5)**
10 (11) 32124 **BUNGLE BAY** 49 (D) H Evans 4-9-7 **J Leavy (7)**
11 (9) -0001 **DIAMOND DREAMER** 23 (B,CD) P Chamings 3-9-6 **D Muscutt**
12 (5) 65002 **EL HIBRI** 18 I Williams 4-9-3 **R Kingscote**

5-1 El Hibri, 11-2 Bungle Bay, 13-2 Diamond Dreamer, Sympathise, 7-1 Muy Muy Guapo, 8-1 Oriental Spirit, First Company, 10-1 Guiteau, No Speed Limit.

Newbury

Rob Wright

1.50 Von Baer
2.25 Machiavellian Lady
3.00 Ebt's Guard
3.35 Houstonn
4.10 Aldaary
4.45 Shagpyle
5.20 Concorde

Going: heavy, soft in places
Draw: no advantage — **Racing TV**

1.50 Maiden Stakes (2-Y-O: £6,480: 6f) (14)

1 (3) 56 **ASSEMBLY CALL** 12 T Dascombe 9-7 **K Shoemark**
2 (2) 0 **CALL TIME** 14 J S Moore 9-7 **L Keniry**
3 (5) 0 **CLASSY HOPES** 39 J Butler 9-7 **David Egan**
4 (4) 0 **CLYDE BAY** 8 E J-Houghton 9-7 **G Downing**
5 (14) 0 **GREAT ACCLAIM** 27 E J-Houghton 9-7 **C Bishop**
6 (13) 0523 **HURRICANE POWER** 18 P & O Cole 9-7 **J Watson**
7 (11) 5 **MOVIE MAKER** 32 S bin Suroor 9-7 **K O'Neill**
8 (12) **REBAATT** W Haggas 9-7 **T Marquand**
9 (9) **ROMANEE** J Ryan 9-7 **C Fallon**
10 (8) 00 **TIMEBAR** 8 R Hannon 9-7 **P Dobbs**
11 (1) 5 **VON BAER** 13 B Meehan 9-7 **D Probert**
12 (7) 0 **CLEAR AIM** 18 J Boyle 9-2 **C Howarth (5)**
13 (10) 0 **GATOR GIRL** 18 J G O'Shea 9-2 **F Marsh**
14 (6) 0 **LADY TWILIGHT** 30 G L Moore 9-2 **R Hornby**

9-4 Hurricane Power, 4-1 Rebaatt, 5-1 Movie Maker, 6-1 Assembly Call, 8-1 Von Baer, 12-1 Great Acclaim, 14-1 Clyde Bay, 16-1 Timebar.

2.25 Conditions Stakes (2-Y-O: £10,308: 7f) (7)

1 (4) 21163 **SNAFIYA** 17 (P) Alice Haynes 9-3 **K O'Neill**
2 (3) 00 **CADOGAN GARDENS** 15 C Hills 9-0 **K Stott**
3 (7) 0 **HIYA HONEY** 18 R Teal 9-0 **L Edmunds**
4 (2) **INVERSION** H & R Charlton 9-0 **D Probert**
5 (6) 633 **LOKANA** 10 D O'Meara 9-0 **J Watson**
6 (5) **MACHIAVELLIAN LADY** E J-Houghton 9-0 **C Bishop**
7 (1) 32 **SERENE SERAPH** 15 R Hannon 9-0 **P Dobbs**

6-4 Serene Seraph, 7-2 Lokana, 4-1 Snafiya, 5-1 Inversion, 12-1 Machiavellian Lady, 20-1 Cadogan Gardens, 25-1 Hiya Honey.

3.00 Nursery (2-Y-O: £6,621: 7f) (9)

1 (9) 541 **JUBILEE WALK** 43 J Ferguson 9-9 **C Fallon**
2 (5) 1324 **PINK SATIN** 17 (P,BF) P & O Cole 9-6 **J P Spencer**
3 (1) 22022 **FUSTERLANDIA** 28 D F Davis 9-5 **K Shoemark**
4 (4) 013 **SONMARG** 35 S P C Woods 9-5 **T Marquand**
5 (3) 14260 **INNVINCIBLE FRIEND** 30 (P) T Dascombe 9-4 **P-L Jamin**
6 (6) 2644 **BOYFRIEND** 15 R Hannon 9-4 **P Dobbs**
7 (8) 63521 **COMMANDER CROUCH** 9 (D) R Hannon 9-4(6ex) **A Voikhansky (5)**
8 (7) 6523 **EBT'S GUARD** 22 W Muir & C Grassick 9-2 **L Edmunds**
9 (2) 26101 **LIV MY LIFE** 17 R Hannon 9-2 **S Hitchcott**

4-1 Pink Satin, 5-1 Liv My Life, 6-1 Fusterlandia, Jubilee Walk, Commander Crouch, 13-2 Ebt's Guard, 8-1 Sonmarg, 10-1 Boyfriend, 14-1 Innvincible Friend.

3.35 Novice Stakes (2-Y-O: £16,200: 1m) (9)

1 (1) 1 **BLUE LEMONS** 10 R Hannon 9-8 **T Marquand**
2 (9) 1 **DEFIANCE** 43 (D) R Varian 9-8 **D Egan**
3 (4) 01 **KING'S GAMBIT** 35 (CD) H & R Charlton 9-8 **K Stott**
4 (6) 1 **ROYAL SUPREMACY** 33 A Balding 9-8 **R Hornby**
5 (2) **BRACKEN'S LAUGH** R Hughes 9-2 **F Marsh**
6 (5) 02 **HOUSTONN** 15 R Hannon 9-2 **P Dobbs**
7 (8) **MUFID** (T) M Tregoning 9-2 **J Crowley**
8 (7) **PALACE GREEN** R Hughes 9-2 **C Fallon**
9 (3) **SYNCHRONIZE** J & T Gosden 9-2 **K Shoemark**

7-2 Defiance, 9-2 Houstonn, 11-2 Royal Supremacy, 6-1 King's Gambit, 13-2 Blue Lemons, 15-2 Synchronize, 10-1 Bracken's Laugh, 12-1 Mufid, 14-1 Palace Green.

4.10 Listed Stakes (£22,684: 7f) (8)

1 (7) 1-424 **ALDAARY** 51 (D) W Haggas 5-9-4 **J Crowley**
2 (3) 51350 **AL MUBHIR** 49 (T,D) W Haggas 4-9-4 **T Marquand**
3 (2) 20104 **BIGGLES** 6 (CD) R Beckett 6-9-4 **R Hornby**
4 (4) 10022 **POPMASTER** 13 E Walker 5-9-4 **R Coakley**
5 (6) 50466 **RODABALLO** 34 (D) G Elosegui (SPA) 6-9-4 **J P Spencer**
6 (1) 60665 **THE WIZARD OF EYE** 41 (P,C) J S Moore 4-9-4 **D Egan**
7 (8) 63305 **STREETS OF GOLD** 27 (D) E J-Houghton 3-9-1 **C Bishop**
8 (5) 5-004 **AMERICAN KESTREL** 26 (CD) D Menuisier 4-8-13 **K Shoemark**

11-8 Aldaary, 4-1 Streets Of Gold, 7-1 Biggles, 15-2 Al Mubhir, 10-1 Rodaballo, 12-1 The Wizard Of Eye, Popmaster, 16-1 American Kestrel.

4.45 Handicap (£6,621: 1m 4f) (8)

1 (8) 30026 **TASHI** 21 (D) T Ward 6-9-11 **J Crowley**
2 (5) 11514 **SID'S ANNIE** 34 (D) M Usher 4-9-11 **C Bishop**
3 (6) -3120 **MARKET VALUE** 29 W Haggas 3-9-9 **T Marquand**
4 (7) 124 **SHAGPYLE** 57 W Muir & C Grassick 3-9-9 **L Edmunds**
5 (1) 530 **ROCHA DO LEAO** 92 J Chapple-Hyam 3-9-7 **D Egan**
6 (3) 321 **ESMERAY** 28 R Beckett 3-9-5 **R Hornby**
7 (4) 52052 **ARENAS DEL TIEMPO** 8 S Dow 5-9-2 **C Howarth (5)**
8 (2) 12330 **FLASH BARDOT** 16 (D) Jack Channon 3-9-0 **D Probert**

6-4 Esmeray, 5-1 Market Value, 6-1 Rocha Do Leao, 7-1 Arenas Del Tiempo, 8-1 Sid's Annie, 10-1 Shagpyle, Flash Bardot, 25-1 Tashi.

5.20 Handicap (£6,621: 1m 2f) (9)

1 (7) 54404 **CIVIL LAW** 15 (D) R Teal 6-10-1 **L Edmunds**
2 (6) 00-24 **DUBAI SOUQ** 54 (P,BF,D) S bin Suroor 6-9-13 **K Stott**
3 (5) 35130 **FANTASY BELIEVER** 15 (C,D) E Walker 6-9-12 **T Marquand**
4 (1) 43-60 **AMOR VINCIT OMNIA** 134 Harry Eustace 4-9-12 **P-L Jamin**
5 (2) 133/1 **SAYF AL DAWLA** 57 (D) P Chapple-Hyam 5-9-12 **D Egan**
6 (8) 12110 **CONCORDE** 89 G Boughey 3-9-10 **D Probert**
7 (3) 41200 **ENTRANCEMENT** 23 (D) D Menuisier 3-9-3 **B Sayette**
8 (4) 00454 **ELSHAAMEQ** 14 (T) K Frost 4-8-9 **Doubtful**
9 (9) 35035 **CITY CYCLONE** 30 (BF) A Carroll 3-8-5 **K O'Neill**

2-1 Civil Law, 3-1 Sayf Al Dawla, 13-2 Dubai Souq, 7-1 Amor Vincit Omnia, 8-1 Fantasy Believer, Concorde, 14-1 City Cyclone, 25-1 Entrancement.

Blinkered first time: Ayr 2.50 Gale Force Maya. **Kempton Park** 7.45 Larkhill. 7.45 Irezumi. 7.45 Hill Station. 7.45 Clenched. 8.15 Marsh Lock.

Newton Abbot

Rob Wright

2.00 Outlaw Peter
2.35 Honey I'm Good
3.10 Manimole
3.45 Janeslittlevoice
4.20 Wonderful Eagle
4.55 Imperial Measure

Going: heavy — **Sky Sports Racing**

2.00 Novices' Chase (£6,535: 2m 5f) (2)

1 311-4 **WALK IN CLOVER** 117 (D) D Skelton 6-11-5 **H Skelton**
2 2110- **OUTLAW PETER** 160 (T) P Nicholls 7-11-2 **H Cobden**

1-2 Outlaw Peter, 13-8 Walk In Clover.

2.35 Handicap Hurdle (£6,889: 3m 2f 105yd) (6)

1 F4434 **PRESENTING YEATS** 11 (P,CD) M Harris 7-12-0 **B Harris (3)**
2 10-00 **CASPERS COURT** 24 K Woollacott 9-11-11 **B Godfrey**
3 434-3 **BEN LILLY** 10 (P,T) D Pipe 6-11-9 **G Harney (8)**
4 -3114 **HONEY I'M GOOD** 49 (T) E Williams 7-11-8 **Isabel Williams**
5 11344 **ASTROMAN** 11 (D) Syd Hosie 6-11-8 **L Harrison**
6 23P24 **KAPITALISTE** 31 (T,V,C) Alexandra Dunn 7-11-0 **P Armson**

7-4 Honey I'm Good, 4-1 Ben Lilly, Astroman, 5-1 Presenting Yeats, 7-1 Kapitaliste, 12-1 Caspers Court.

3.10 Novices' Hurdle (£4,955: 2m 1f) (6)

1 21221 **MANIMOLE** 15 N Twiston-Davies 6-11-12 **S Twiston-Davies**
2 6/341 **PRESENTING NELLY** 10 (T) D Skelton 6-11-7 **H Skelton**
3 3/ **CHANTILLY ROSE** 535 (W) D Skelton 6-11-0 **T Durrell (5)**
4 /000- **NATHAN WALKER** 294 K Burke 5-11-0 **H Kimber (3)**
5 3-623 **THEWEDDINGCANWAIT** 79 (T) Syd Hosie 4-10-12 **M G Nolan**
6 5 **UPBEAT BETTY** 88 E Williams 4-10-12 **A Wedge**

11-10 Manimole, 11-4 Presenting Nelly, 5-1 Chantilly Rose, 6-1 Theweddingcanwait, 16-1 Upbeat Betty, 50-1 Nathan Walker.

3.45 Handicap Chase (£6,617: 3m 2f) (4)

1 -3133 **FRANKIE FAULKNER** 11 E Williams 6-12-0 **Isabel Williams**
2 66BP- **FAITQUE DE L'ISLE** 160 M Scudamore 8-11-8 **C Deutsch**
3 U5222 **JANESLITTLEVOICE** 11 Ella Pickard 9-10-4 **Harriet Tucker (7)**
4 05-06 **DONT BE ROBIN** 50 (P,T,D) Mrs R Ford 11-10-2 **B J Powell**

11-10 Frankie Faulkner, 11-8 Janeslittlevoice, 15-2 Faitque De L'Isle, 14-1 Dont Be Robin.

4.20 Novices' Hurdle (£4,955: 2m 6f) (6)

1 32-51 **ALVANIY** 11 W P Mullins (Ire) 5-11-7 **B Hayes**
2 1 **WONDERFUL EAGLE** 31 (P,C) P Hobbs & J White 4-11-4 **M G Nolan**
3 P/6F- **ALBERTS BAY** 482 Ryan Chapman 6-11-0 **D Noonan**
4 00- **CHANKAYA** F14 (P) Mitchell Hunt 6-11-0 **S Houlihan**
5 456F- **HUGO ALKO** 201 Mrs H Nelmes 6-11-0 **P O'Brien**
6 212 **THIRTYFOUR THIRTY** 61 Syd Hosie 4-10-11 **S Twiston-Davies**

1-2 Alvaniy, 7-2 Wonderful Eagle, 4-1 Thirtyfour Thirty, 66-1 Chankaya, 100-1 Alberts Bay, Hugo Alko.

4.55 Handicap Hurdle (£5,528: 2m 1f) (7)

1 3303 **STAR LEGEND** 15 (P) James Owen 4-12-0 **Mr A Chadwick (7)**
2 5-106 **SUFI** 47 (P,C,D) M Harris 9-12-0 **B Harris (5)**
3 6F-0D **REAMS OF LOVE** 100 D J Jeffreys 5-11-9 **K Woods**
4 04131 **GOOD IMPRESSION** 20 (CD) B J Llewellyn 8-11-9 **B R Jones**
5 52-34 **IMPERIAL MEASURE** 114 E Williams 5-11-0 **A Wedge**
6 22/00 **ASCOT DAY** 20 (P) B J Llewellyn 9-10-7 **C Ring (3)**
7 0535P **ALLEZ ALLEZ DANCER** 21 Ella Pickard 5-10-2 **Doubtful**

Evens Star Legend, 11-4 Imperial Measure, 3-1 Good Impression, 25-1 Sufi, Ascot Day, 50-1 Reams Of Love.

Course specialists

Ayr: Trainers W Haggas, 7 winners from 17 runners, 41.2%; Charlie Johnston, 8 from 32, 25%; J J Quinn, 16 from 82, 19.5%. **Jockeys** J Fanning, 36 winners from 223 rides, 16.1%; D C Costello, 3 from 19, 15.8%; D Tudhope, 32 from 208, 15.4%.

Kempton Park: Trainers C Appleby, 57 from 175, 32.6%; S bin Suroor, 31 from 124, 25%; R Varian, 65 from 280, 23.2%. **Jockeys** W Buick, 59 from 266, 22.2%; O Murphy, 89 from 435, 20.5%; J Fisher, 3 from 15, 20%.

Newbury: Trainers W Haggas, 36 from 173, 20.8%; H Eustace, 4 from 20, 20%; J & T Gosden, 19 from 104, 18.3%. **Jockeys** J Crowley, 33 from 190, 17.4%; T Marquand, 39 from 235, 16.6%; J Watson, 21 from 143, 14.7%.

Newton Abbot: Trainers Philip Hobbs & Johnson White, 5 from 17, 29.4%; P Nicholls, 43 from 154, 27.9%; D Skelton, 10 from 42, 23.8%. **Jockeys** B Harris, 6 from 21, 28.6%; H Skelton, 8 from 32, 25%; L Harrison, 5 from 20, 25%.

Yesterday's racing results

Ayr

Going: good to soft (good in places)

1.20 (7f 50yd) 1, **Respectful** (S H James, 20-1); 2, Individualism (5-2); 3, Volterra (5-4 fav). 11 ran. ¾l, 1l. K R Burke.

1.50 (1m) 1, **Spirit Of Acklam** (Joanna Mason, 9-2); 2, Sisyphean (11-10 fav); 3, Offer And Receive (9-4). 9 ran. Hd, 1¾l. M & D Easterby.

2.25 (5f) 1, **Aconcagua Mountain** (S H James, 9-2 fav); 2, So Grateful (20-1); 3†, American Affair (11-2). 3†, Sixcor (10-1). 20 ran. NR: Paddy's Day. 1¾l, ½l. I Jardine.

3.00 (1m 2f) 1, **Thundering** (G Lee, 12-1); 2, Euchen Glen (4-1); 3, Painters Palette (9-2). 8 ran. NR: Fools Rush In, Marie's Diamond. Hd, 1l. K A Ryan.

3.35 (1m 2f) 1, **Alpha Female** (J Fanning, 11-4 fav); 2, Fiver Friday (15-2); 3, Bosc Girl (100-30). 7 ran. 1l, 2¾l. E De Giles.

4.10 (1m) 1, **Hortzadar** (Jason Hart, 12-1); 2, Ventura Rascal (28-1); 3, Black Friday (8-1). 12 ran. 1l, sh hd. D O'Meara.

4.45 (7f 50yd) 1, **Cosa Sara** (William Pyle, 4-1); 2, Kalganov (9-2); 3, Jkr Cobbler (100-30 fav). 11 ran. Sh hd, hd. J S Goldie.

5.17 (7f 50yd) 1, **End Zone** (B A Curtis, 11-1); 2, Highfield Viking (4-1); 3, Rwenearlytheredad (13-2). 11 ran. Ns, nk. R Fell & S Murray.

Jackpot: Not won. Pool of £191,060.53 carried forward today.

Placepot: £204.90. Quadpot: £129.10.

Pontefract

Going: good to soft

2.00 (6f) 1, **Havana Pursuit** (Sean Kirrane, 11-2); 2, Derwent Boy (11-2); 3, Gentle Ellen (10-1). 10 ran. NR: Atomise. Nk, 1l. T D Easterby.

2.35 (6f) 1, **Bondy** (Harry Russell, 4-1); 2, Catton Lady (12-1); 3, Golden Strike (18-5). 12 ran. 1¼l, ns. B Smart.

3.10 (1m 4f 5yd) 1, **Roaring Legend** (Daniel Muscutt, 7-2); 2, Animato (12-1); 3, Damascus Steel (6-1). 8 ran. Nk, nk. J Ferguson.

3.45 (6f) 1, **Unequal Love** (Tom Marquand, 2-1 fav); 2, Minnetonka (9-2); 3, Hello Queen (6-1). 7 ran. 1¼l, ns. W J Haggas.

4.20 (2m 1f 27yd) 1, **Manxman** (R Havlin, 4-6 fav); 2, Dragonball Prince (9-2); 3, Yasmin From York (11-1). 5 ran. 1¾l, nk. S & E Crisford.

4.55 (1m 6yd) 1, **Talis Evolvere** (S M Levey, 10-3); 2, Hosanna Power (13-8 fav); 3, Marching Band (100-30). 8 ran. 4¼l, 1¾l. R Hannon.

5.30 (1m 6yd) 1, **Global Spirit** (Jonny Peate, 7-1); 2, Mexicali Rose (9-2 fav); 3, Mother Mary (8-1). 12 ran. NR: Maid In Kentucky. ¾l, 1¾l. R Fell & S Murray.

Placepot: £34.80.
Quadpot: £5.70.

Yarmouth

Going: good to soft (soft in places)

2.10 (1m 3yd) 1, **Phoenix Passion** (K Shoemark, 3-1); 2, Chris's Mate (12-1); 3, St Lukes Chelsea (9-4). 6 ran. NR: Due Consideration. ½l, 4¾l. E Walker.

2.45 (1m 3yd) 1, **Francesco Baracca** (Charles Bishop, 6-4 fav); 2, Manos Arriba (13-2); 3, Silver Shamrock (28-1). 7 ran. NR: Middlesex. 1½l, 1½l. Eve Johnson Houghton.

3.20 (6f 3yd) 1, **Mayo Neighs** (Rossa Ryan, 7-2); 2, Another Gift (7-1); 3, Jimmy Speaking (11-1). 10 ran. NR: Fusterlandia. 3¾l, 2¼l. R M Beckett.

3.55 (6f 3yd) 1, **Hydration** (K Shoemark, 3-1); 2, Kuwait City (13-2); 3, First Folio (5-2 fav). 6 ran. 5l, 1l. H & R Charlton.

4.30 (1m 6f 17yd) 1, **Tajanis** (Cieren Fallon, 9-2); 2, Sailing On (9-2); 3, Divine Comedy (6-1). 7 ran. 2¼l, ¾l. W J Haggas.

5.05 (1m 3yd) 1, **Dream Pirate** (Marco Ghiani, 4-1); 2, Where's Freddy (15-2); 3, Kalamunda (17-2). 10 ran. NR: Hurricane Kiko. Hd, 1½l. T Kent.

5.40 (7f 3yd) 1, **Royal Bliss** (K Shoemark, 10-1); 2, Seattle Time (17-2); 3, Fast Flo (12-1). 10 ran. 1l, 1l. Miss A Murphy.

6.10 (7f 3yd) 1, **Primrose Maid** (R Ffrench, 9-2); 2, Goose Rock (4-1); 3, Moralisa (13-2). 8 ran. NR: Decipher, Galileo Glass. 1½l, ns. Mrs C A Dunnett.

Placepot: £388.80.
Quadpot: £60.90.

Chelmsford

Going: standard

5.24 (1m 6f) 1, **Al Azhar** (Mr A Sainz, 9-2); 2, Warning Sign (7-2); 3, My Chiquita (15-2). 7 ran. ¾l, 2½l. M P Tregoning.

6.00 (1m) 1, **Alpen Power** (F Norton, 5-4 fav); 2, Just Rita (9-4); 3, Pinjarra (13-2). 9 ran. 1½l, 2l. C Johnston.

6.30 (7f) 1, **Kodi Noir** (K T O'Neill, 6-1); 2, Daisy Roots (17-2); 3, Carry On Aitch (150-1). 13 ran. NR: Queen Sarabi. Nk, 1¼l. Alice Haynes.

7.00 (7f) 1, **He's A Monster** (Hollie Doyle, 13-2); 2, Ehraz (9-4 fav); 3, War In Heaven (12-1). 12 ran. NR: Mums Tipple, Zero Carbon. 1½l, nk. A Watson.

7.30 (1m 6f) 1, **Grand Duchess Olga** (Dylan Hogan, 11-1); 2, Greek Giant (100-30); 3, Haaland (9-1). 6 ran. Hd, ½l. Miss J Feilden.

8.00 (5f) 1, **Universal Grace** (David Probert, 8-1); 2, Mick's Spirit (11-4); 3, Boom The Groom (5-1). 7 ran. NR: Amor De Mi Vida, Dalby Forest. ns, ¾l. S C Williams.

8.30 (1m 2f) 1, **Egoiste** (David Probert, 16-5); 2, James Bradley (13-2); 3, Trackman (5-2 fav). 11 ran. NR: Cryptos Dream. ½l, ½l. D Menuisier.

Placepot: £154.00. Quadpot: £59.50.

‘If you’re passive at the scrum you will be eaten alive’



Steven Kitshoff and Frans Malherbe tell **Will Kelleher** what it’s like to be part of South Africa’s ‘bomb squad’

Welcome to the scrum clinic. Your tutors: Steven Kitshoff and Frans Malherbe. Two of the most feared and formidable physical physicists in rugby, who combine science and art to create the brutal beauty of the South African scrum.

An audience with these men is rare, but brings a fascinating insight into the mentality of a Springbok forward.

Kitshoff and Malherbe have been at the heart of the fabled “bomb squad”, the set of substitute forwards who blasted England away to win the 2019 World Cup, and have now graduated to starting props.

Next in their sights are the No1 side in the world, Ireland, in a tantalising pool B match in Paris that will send shock waves through the 2023 World Cup, whatever the result.

South Africa have many threats, but Ireland know the mightiest comes up front. Eight starting forwards will be replaced by seven more late in the game; all 15 will be intent on causing damage at the scrum.

“Jeez, jah, it’s much more mental and about mindset than anyone thinks,” Malherbe says, when asked about South Africa’s favourite set piece.

“It’s about going into that mode to really f*** a guy up. You can’t be passive,” Kitshoff adds.

“If you don’t get into that mindset then you’re going to go backwards and they’ll eat you alive,” Malherbe continues. “It’s not really a choice.”

Only one change for Ireland

Ireland have picked Jamison Gibson-Park at scrum half to face South Africa in Paris tomorrow in the only change from the team who beat Tonga 59-16. Despite South Africa choosing seven forwards and one back on their bench, Ireland have stuck with a five-three split. “I love it,” Andy Farrell, the Ireland head coach, said of the Springboks’ strategy. “I’m pretty confident in the five forwards we’ve got coming on.”

Ireland team H Keenan; M Hansen, G Ringrose, B Aki, J Lowe; J Sexton, J Gibson-Park; A Porter, R Kelleher, T Furlong, T Beirne, J Ryan, P O’Mahony, J van der Flier, C Doris. **Replacements** D Sheehan, D Kilcoyne, F Bealham, I Henderson, R Baird, C Murray, J Crowley, R Henshaw.

From those remarks it might sound as if Kitshoff and Malherbe — who will start at loose and tight-head prop for South Africa against Ireland tomorrow — are as difficult company off the field as on it. That could not be further from the truth.

Before, during and after our chat in Cape Town ahead of the World Cup they are keen to point out the best beach-side bars in Camps Bay and suggest vineyards to visit, as well as talk shop.

Both men have thick Afrikaans accents; Malherbe, 32, is from a countryside farming town in the Western Cape, Bredasdorp, two hours from the city. On days off he travels to hunt game in the Karoo — a semi-desert where wildebeest, antelopes and a small number of lions roam. His friend makes the meat he returns with into biltong, for the players to eat on their bus trips to games.

Kitshoff, 31, meanwhile is more of a city slicker. His weekends involve wakeboarding up the coast in Langebaan. He is more likely to be seen sipping brandy and eating dinner out in the wine regions of Stellenbosch than hunting for it in the bush.

“My missus’s parents have a sheep farm in the Karoo, so I just get the lamb from them and put it in the oven,” Kitshoff says with a chuckle.

So while they have differing personalities Kitshoff and Malherbe share one love: scrummaging.

“For me, there’s a lot of pride in Rassie Erasmus coming back and highlighting it,” Malherbe says of the director of rugby, who took the Springboks back to their roots when he took over in 2018. “To keep that special thing going is a main goal for us with the Boks. There’s a responsibility to keep it up there and protect it.”

Kitshoff adds: “Our scrums in training are sometimes tougher than a Test match, but you’re not as aggressive and when the guy falls you’re not going to drive his head into the ground, you’re going to stand [him] up.

“The way we analyse teams and ourselves makes the job a bit easier, but it’s not always easy to get go-forward in a scrum. When you execute it well you get that endorphin spike.”

Malherbe picks up: “It’s awesome because it doesn’t happen that easily. When it happens, it’s special and you must enjoy it.”

So what is it actually like to be in the middle of a scrum? “The smell is terrible,” Malherbe says, laughing.

Kitshoff takes over, adding: “It’s just pressure, like when you put yourself under a 250kg squat and you have to stay in that position for a couple of sessions. It’s that constant pressure from both sides. There’s a guy coming from the front, a prop that wants to put you in trouble and a back five pushing you forward. That constant pressure.”

South Africa v Ireland
Stade de France
Tomorrow, kick-off 8pm
TV: ITV1
Radio: BBC 5 Live

That is for a loose-head. For a tight-head, the feeling is different. “The tight-head is in the middle, and if the loose-head is in a good position under your chest and neck you have to stay straight and it hurts your shoulder, neck, spine and legs as well,” Malherbe explains.

“It feels like something is going to pop. You don’t know where, but something! You have to remind yourself he [your opposite number] is also feeling that, so it’s about who gives up first.”

The pair describe how their legs sometimes go numb in a scrum and how long ones bring with them feelings of dizziness. Watch the props after a lengthy scrum, they say, and you will see them look disorientated for a few seconds, as they stand up and try to find their breath having held it for too long.

“If you get stuck and are trying to fight it, you’re holding your breath just to survive the constant pressure,” Kitshoff says.

“That’s quite something to stay in there,” Malherbe says. “When the ball is available but the scrum half leaves it. I’m really not nice to them if that happens.”

“We speak a lot of French to them!” Kitshoff jokes.

Resets are a nightmare for them; far more so than for watching fans. “It’s normally someone who plays around with tricks, takes it down, or plays

Results and scoreboards

Football

Europa League
Group A

West Ham (0) **3** — **Backa Topola** (0) **1**
Petrovic 66 (og), Kudus 70, Soucek 82 — Stanic 47

Other result Olympiacos 2 Freiburg 3.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
West Ham	1	1	0	0	3	1	2	**3**
Freiburg	1	1	0	0	3	2	1	**3**
Olympiacos	1	0	0	1	2	3	-1	**0**
Backa Topola	1	0	0	1	1	3	-2	**0**

Group B

Brighton (1) **2** — **AEK Athens** (2) **3**
João Pedro 30 (pen) 67 (pen) — Sidibé 11, Gacinovic 40, Ponce 84

Other result Ajax 3 Marseille 3.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
AEK Athens	1	1	0	0	3	2	1	**3**
Marseille	1	0	1	0	3	3	0	**1**
Ajax	1	0	1	0	3	3	0	**1**
Brighton	1	0	0	0	2	3	-1	**0**

Group C

Rangers (0) **1** — **Real Betis** (0) **0**
Sima 67 — 45,634

Other result Sparta Prague 3 Aris Limassol 2.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Sparta Prague	1	1	0	0	3	2	1	**3**
Rangers	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	**3**
Aris Limassol	1	0	0	1	2	3	-1	**0**
Real Betis	1	0	0	1	0	1	-1	**0**

Group E

LASK Linz (1) **1** — **Liverpool** (0) **3**
Flecker 14, 18,091 — Núñez 56 (pen), Díaz 63, Salah 88

Other result Union Saint-Gilloise 1 Toulouse 1.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Liverpool	1	1	0	0	3	1	2	**3**
US-Gilloise	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	**1**
Toulouse	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	**1**
LASK Linz	1	0	0	1	1	3	-2	**0**

Group D Atalanta 2 Rakow Czestochowa 0; Sturm Graz 1 Sporting Lisbon 2. **Group F** Panathinaikos 2 Villarreal 0; Rennes 3 Maccabi Haifa 0. **Group G** Servette 0 Slavia Prague 2; Sheriff Tiraspol 1 Roma 2. **Group H** Bayer Leverkusen 4 Hacken 0; Qarabag 1 Molde 0.

Europa Conference League
Group E

Legia Warsaw (2) **3** — **Aston Villa** (2) **2**
Wszolek 3, Muçi 26, 51, 27,801 — Durán 6, Digne 38

Other result Zrinjski Mostar 4 AZ Alkmaar 3.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Zrinjski	1	1	0	0	4	3	1	**3**
Legia Warsaw	1	1	0	0	3	2	1	**3**
AZ Alkmaar	1	0	0	1	3	4	-1	**0**
Aston Villa	1	0	0	1	2	3	-1	**0**

Group G

E Frankfurt (1) **2** — **Aberdeen** (1) **1**
Marmoush 11 (pen), Kock 61 — Polvara 22, 55,500

Other result HJK Helsinki 2 PAOK Salonika 3.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
PAOK	1	1	0	0	3	2	1	**3**
Eintracht	1	1	0	0	2	1	1	**3**
HJK Helsinki	1	0	0	1	2	3	-1	**0**
Aberdeen	1	0	0	1	1	2	-1	**0**

Cricket

LV= County Championship
Division One
Essex v Hampshire

Chelmsford (third day of four): Hampshire, with two first-innings wickets in hand, are 125 runs behind Essex

Essex First Innings 447-9 dec (A M Rossington 104, M J J Critchley 99, S R Harmer 62, U T Yadav 51, T Westley 50)

Hampshire First Innings (overnight 10-0)

T E Albert lbw b Walter	39
F S Middleton b Harmer	47
*N R T Gubbins c Lawrence b Harmer	1
J M Vince c Westley b Critchley	46
T J Prest not out	102
L A Dawson c Porter b Harmer	1
†B C Brown c Browne b Harmer	16
K H D Barker c Walter b S J Cook	42
F S Organ c Critchley b Harmer	0
K J Abbott not out	8
Extras (b 9, lb 10, w 1)	20
Total (8 wkts, 85.4 overs)	**322**

M Abbas to bat.
Fall of wickets 1-68, 2-71, 3-134, 4-138, 5-141, 6-195, 7-284, 8-285.
Bowling Porter 10-3-27-0; S J Cook 13.4-5-28-1; Harmer 36-6-143-5; Yadav 12-0-38-0; Walter 4-0-14-1; Critchley 7-1-38-1; Lawrence 3-0-15-0.
Umpires S J O’Shaughnessy and N J Llong.

Lancashire v Nottinghamshire

Emirates Old Trafford (third day of four; Nottinghamshire won toss): Lancashire have scored 225 for six wickets against Nottinghamshire

Lancashire First Innings

L W P Wells b Fernando	28
*K K Jennings lbw b Mullaney	42
J J Bohannon c Moores b Mullaney	6
S J Croft c Montgomery b Harrison	45
†G J Bell b Fernando	26
G P Balderson c Moores b Hutton	1
M F Hurst not out	35
T E Bailey not out	19
Extras (b 4, lb 15, nb 4)	23
Total (6 wkts, 69 overs)	**225**

W S A Williams, J M Blatherwick and J P Morley to bat.
Fall of wickets 1-84, 2-88, 3-91, 4-132, 5-133, 6-181.
Bowling Hutton 14-5-38-1; Fernando 15-6-31-2; Paterson 13-3-43-0; Mullaney 13-5-32-2; James 5-0-30-0; Harrison 9-1-32-1.
Nottinghamshire B T Slater, H Hameed, *S J Mullaney, J M Clarke, M Montgomery, †T J Moores, L W James, C G Harrison, B A Hutton, D Paterson, A M Fernando.
Umpires M H A Syed and I D Blackwell.

Middlesex v Warwickshire

Lord’s (third day of four): Middlesex, with nine second-innings wickets in hand, are 98 runs behind Warwickshire

Middlesex First Innings 121 (O J Hannon-Dalby five for 29)

Second Innings

S D Robson not out	51
*M D Stoneman c Burgess b Miles	32
J L B Davies not out	10
Extras (lb 1, nb 2)	3
Total (1 wkt, 29.3 overs)	**96**

Fall of wicket 1-78.
Bowling Hannon-Dalby 10-5-35-0; Rushworth 10-0-35-0; Barnard 5-3-10-0; Briggs 1-0-4-0; Miles 3.3-0-11-1.

Warwickshire First Innings (overnight 228-6)

*W M H Rhodes c Robson b Bamber	102
D R Briggs c Simpson b Helm	99
C N Miles b Murtagh	29
O J Hannon-Dalby c Cracknell b Helm	10
C Rushworth not out	6
Extras (b 1, lb 10, nb 14)	25
Total (89.4 overs)	**315**

Fall of wickets 1-0, 2-13, 3-25, 4-43, 5-87, 6-95, 7-238, 8-296, 9-298.
Bowling Murtagh 25-5-83-6; Bamber 18-5-62-2; Higgins 6-0-14-0; Yadav 16-1-70-0; De Caires 6-0-17-0; Helm 17.4-7-51-2; Robson 1-0-7-0.
Umpires R J Warren and G D Lloyd.

Somerset v Kent

Taunton (third day of four): Somerset have scored 404 for four wickets against Kent

Somerset First Innings (overnight 214-2)

L P Goldsworthy c Leaning b Singh	122
A R I Umeed c Finch b Leaning	49
T Kohler-Cadmore not out	68
†J E K Rew not out	3
Extras (b 8, lb 6, w 1, nb 18)	33
Total (4 wkts, 86 overs)	**404**

T Banton, L Gregory, J H Davey, N Wagner and J A Brooks to bat.
Fall of wickets 1-73, 2-205, 3-310, 4-394.
Bowling Hogan 11.2-1-30-0; Bhuiyan 16-2-87-1; Evison 17.4-2-66-0; Singh 19-0-95-1; Bell-Drummond 13-1-54-1; Leaning 6-0-34-1; Denly 3-0-24-0.
Kent T S Muyeye, B G Compton, D J Bell-Drummond, *J A Leaning, J L Denly, †H Z Finch, M K O’Riordan, J D M Evison, A Bhuiyan, J Singh, M G Hogan.
Umpires T Lungley and M J Saggers.

Surrey v Northamptonshire

Kia Oval (third day of four): Surrey, with four first-innings wickets in hand, are 199 runs behind Northamptonshire

Northamptonshire First Innings (overnight 351-9)

K K Nair c and b Lawes	150
C J White not out	5
Extras (lb 3, w 2, nb 18)	23
Total (106.5 overs)	**357**

Fall of wickets 1-33, 2-51, 3-106, 4-132, 5-138, 6-151, 7-193, 8-307, 9-307.
Bowling Roach 19-6-61-0; Worrall 26-7-74-1; Overton 15.5-1-64-3; Clark 21-5-43-1; Burns 0.1-0-0-0; Lawes 23.5-5-105-5; Patel 1-0-7-0.

Surrey First Innings

*R J Burns c Gay b Taylor	11
D P Sibley lbw b White	32
R S Patel c Broad b Procter	5
B S Sudharsan c McManus b Procter	3
†B T Foakes not out	33
C T Steel b White	0
J Clark c McManus b Sanderson	9
J Overton not out	50
Extras (b 5, lb 2, nb 8)	15
Total (6 wkts, 52.2 overs)	**158**

T E Lawes, K A J Roach and D J Worrall to bat.
Fall of wickets 1-26, 2-43, 3-49, 4-62, 5-66, 6-79.
Bowling Sanderson 20-8-45-1; White 13.2-4-33-2; Taylor 10-2-39-1; Procter 9-2-34-2.
Umpires R A White and P R Pollard.

STEVE HAAG SPORTS



Malherbe, left, and Kitshoff have now graduated to starting props

with the ref or whatever," Malherbe says. "It's tiring for us as well."

A dominant scrum is not just there to win penalties. It aids the defence by staying strong, it builds pressure, lays a platform for the attack, and is a psychological weapon to use against the opposition and the referee.

"Every scrum is a bit of a wrestle, a fight," Kitshoff says. "You're trying to get dominance. A scrum is one of the key indicators to win games. It's getting into that mindset that every scrum matters."

Because it is so important to South Africa, their scrum analysis is incredibly detailed. It looks at the speed of the opposing pack's movements, their players' driving height, how they bind, if they collapse under pressure and how that manifests itself. Does the hooker pop up? Does the loose-head overextend his torso, or drop his bind? Does the tight-head drive on an angle?

"I didn't do too well in physics at school, but it's a bit like a physics lesson," Malherbe says.

A myth they want to bust is that scrummaging is all about the props. "We talk about the back five — the locks and the loose trio — it's a massive thing that they are committed to the scrum," Malherbe says. "It's really not only us. It's probably the biggest cliché in rugby but it's really the whole pack.

"That lock or that flank is thinking about what's happening after the scrum. Where do they have to go and tackle? If he's tired he could have a break at the scrum and take a little breather. It's only his mind that controls that.

"Imagine if that guy takes a rest or is not switched on completely, what pressure you're going to be under?

"It's for them to understand that there is reward — if we don't get a penalty then they [the opposition] will at least be on the back foot and we're in a strong position. If it's early in the game and the ref lets a 50-50 go then it's at least in the ref's mind that this pack is dominant and the opposition know they're in for something today."

The referees are subjected to detailed analysis too: what they usually give penalties for, what "pictures" they like to see — of a front row with a strong, solid bind — and of what they regard as "clean" scrummaging. Can you talk to them? Do they like to be ignored, or complemented? The purpose is to get onside with the official however you can, so when there is a collapse he whistles your way.

It is intricate and methodical, then. Well, until the game starts. "It's full-on aggression, not this technical talk we're having now," Malherbe says. "If you're not going to do it you're going to get hurt."

Of course, the Springboks' intention is to hurt their opponents;

> Our scrums in training are sometimes tougher than when we're playing a Test match

that is why they invented the bomb squad in 2019 — six forwards coming off the bench to either diffuse an escalating situation or keep the explosions going. The squad has grown to seven for this World Cup, much to the dismay of many.

Kitshoff and Malherbe find that crowing amusing.

"Everyone was moaning, complaining about the bomb squad and we went back to 5-3 [forwards-backs split] benches and on the end-of-year tour everyone went 6-2 against us," Malherbe says.

He and Kitshoff are unlikely to appear on billboards and posters on bedroom walls any time soon, but they are key to everything the Springboks do. By explaining their roles, they hope supporters understand that powerful scrummaging is not ruining the sport.

"Generally, people that want to see back lines running at each other will probably hate it after the third reset. They'll turn the TV off," Malherbe concludes.

"There's definitely space for it. I think if someone understands what it adds to the game, and that if you put someone on the back foot how much more dominant the defence can be, and the ripple effect a scrum can have, then they can appreciate it."

Watch out Ireland, the scrum doctors will see you now.

ECB to offer its stars multi-year £1m deals

Cricket
Elizabeth Ammon

The ECB will for the first time offer multi-year central contracts worth up to £1 million a year to 21 England players, including Harry Brook, Zak Crawley, Mark Wood, Jos Buttler, Joe Root and Ben Stokes to try to stave off the threat of the IPL.

Franchises in the IPL now have stakes in a number of other T20 franchise tournaments and are set to offer some players full-year deals worth up to £5 million, which would mean they become that players' main employer rather than their country or county.

Players would, in effect, be loaned back to their country for international duty rather than the other way round. To try to prevent losing control of their best players, the ECB has begun to offer some players contracts for up to three years.

Eight players are set to be offered three-year deals including Test captain Ben Stokes, Yorkshire batsman Brook, fast bowler Wood and a further 13, including Jonny Bairstow, Crawley, Ollie Pope, Ben Duckett, Young and seam bowlers Josh Tongue, Gus Atkinson and Brydon Carse will be offered two-year deals. Others, including James Anderson and possibly Chris Woakes, who are nearing the end of their careers, will be offered one-year deals.

The new set of contracts is due to be announced in October and will be the first time that contracts longer than 12 months have been offered to players.

It is not guaranteed that all players will accept the deals. They will be weighing up those deals against the amount of money they could earn from T20 franchise contracts which could mean they have to miss international bilateral series. Wood has already stated that he would have to consider his long-term future and whether, given his injury history and his age, he would prefer the flexibility and earning potential of balancing England duty with franchise deals.

Negotiations between the ECB and the Professional Cricketers Association have been going on for weeks. All contracts will be full deals rather than the incremental deals (whereby the ECB paid some of their salary and their county the rest of it) although the value of those deals will range from £300,000 a year to about £900,000 a year.

Multi-format players such as Stokes, Root, Bairstow, Wood and Jofra Archer will have deals of about £900,000 a year before match fees and captaincy and win bonuses. Last year there were 18 players on central contracts and six incremental deals. This year there will be at least 25 full deals.

Roy rejects England call

John Westerby

Jason Roy has turned down the chance to play in the final two matches of England's Metro Bank ODI series against Ireland after it was confirmed that Joe Root will rest before the World Cup.

Roy, 33, a regular in England's 50-over team in recent years, was dropped from the squad for the tournament in India and replaced by Harry Brook.

Root had been due to play in the first match of the series against Ireland on Wednesday, becoming the only member of the World Cup squad to feature in the series, but the game at Headingley was washed out and Root will now spend time with his family before leaving for India next week.

Roy, who is still viewed as a top-order reserve batsman for the World Cup, has been offered the opportunity to come into the squad to face Ireland at Trent Bridge tomorrow and Bristol on Tuesday but, still smarting from his omission, he has opted not to take up a place in the second-string side. Instead, Tom Kohler-Cadmore, the 29-year-old uncapped Somerset batsman, will join the squad in Nottingham.

A decision has yet to be made on whether Roy will make himself available to act as a reserve for the World Cup, which begins when England play New Zealand in Ahmedabad on October 5.

Kohler-Cadmore has been called up for the first time, having previously been suspended from all England selection due to his involvement in a WhatsApp group during his time at Worcestershire that detailed sexual conquests. The WhatsApp group came to light during the rape trial of Alex Hepburn, who was jailed for five years in 2019.

Division Two: Derbyshire v Sussex

Derby (third day of four): Derbyshire, with nine first-innings wickets in hand, are six runs behind Sussex

Sussex First Innings	
A G H Orr c Guest b Chappell	10
T G R Clark c Guest b Dal	31
*T P Alsop c Guest b Conners	5
J M Coles c Guest b Dal	6
D K Ibrahim c Guest b Conners	2
H D Ward c Guest b Chappell	2
†O J Carter b Conners	2
F J Hudson-Prentice c Guest b Chappell	23
H T Crocombe b Chappell	4
J D Unadkat c Thomson b Conners	4
S F Hunt not out	0
Extras (b 5, lb 4, nb 2)	11
Total (36.2 overs)	**100**

Fall of wickets 1-18, 2-27, 3-40, 4-57, 5-61, 6-63, 7-65, 8-77, 9-100.
Bowling Chappell 10.2-1-39-4; Conners 13-4-32-4; Brown 5-0-17-0; Dal 8-6-3-2.

Derbyshire First Innings	
H R C Came c Orr b Hunt	26
L M Reece not out	50
†B D Guest not out	12
Extras (lb 2, nb 4)	6
Total (1 wkt, 23 overs)	**94**

W L Madsen, *J L du Plooy, M J Lamb, A K Dal, A T Thomson, Z J Chappell, P R Brown and S Conners to bat.
Fall of wicket 1-65.
Bowling Unadkat 7-2-21-0; Hudson-Prentice 4-0-17-0; Hunt 6-1-27-1; Crocombe 4-0-13-0; Ibrahim 2-0-14-0.
Umpires P K Baldwin and N A Mallender.

Leicestershire v Yorkshire

Leicester (third day of four): Yorkshire, with nine second-innings wickets in hand, are 35 runs ahead of Leicestershire

Yorkshire First Innings (overnight 155-9)	
J A Thompson c Cox b Scriven	2
B M Cliff not out	0
Extras (b 4)	4
Total (39.2 overs)	**155**

Fall of wickets 1-45, 2-79, 3-91, 4-96, 5-98, 6-112, 7-147, 8-147, 9-155.
Bowling Wright 12-2-44-1; Scriven 12.2-0-47-3; Currie 7-1-32-2; Davis 8-1-28-4.

Second Innings	
A Lyth not out	51
F J Bean b Scriven	43
B O Coad not out	1
Extras (lb 18)	18
Total (1 wkt, 22 overs)	**113**

Fall of wicket 1-112.
Bowling Wright 7-3-24-0; Scriven 8-1-34-1; Currie 3-0-16-0; Davis 4-0-21-0.

Leicestershire First Innings	
R K Patel lbw b Coad	0
S T Evans lbw b Hill	15
*L J Hill c Tattersall b Hill	42
U Amin lbw b Hill	10
L Kimber c Bean b Cliff	4
H J Swindells c Tattersall b Revis	73
†O B Cox lbw b Hill	13
T A R Scriven b Thompson	17
C J C Wright c Lyth b Thompson	0
S W Currie b Cliff	0
W S Davis not out	44
Extras (b 1, lb 12, nb 2)	15
Total (53.1 overs)	**233**

Fall of wickets 1-0, 2-58, 3-65, 4-70, 5-80, 6-97, 7-139, 8-139, 9-140.
Bowling Coad 14-2-47-1; Thompson 12-0-61-2; Hill 16-4-69-4; Cliff 7-0-27-2; Revis 4.1-1-16-1.
Umpires N L Bainton and N Pratt.

Worcestershire v Durham

Worcester (third day of four): Durham, with all first-innings wickets in hand, are 303 runs behind Worcestershire

Worcestershire First Innings	
J D Libby c Robinson b Raine	57
A Ali c Bedingham b Coughlin	25
J A Haynes b Coughlin	35
A J Hose retired hurt	4
K Ali c Jones b de Leede	22
*B L D'Oliveira b Parkinson	63
L V van Beek lbw b de Leede	6
B M J Allison b Raine	22
J Leach not out	8
D Y Pennington lbw b Raine	0
Extras (b 10, lb 9)	19
Total (83 overs)	**313**

Fall of wickets 1-96, 2-117, 3-172, 4-179, 5-248, 6-260, 7-301, 8-313, 9-313.
Bowling Raine 22-4-66-3; Fernando 22-2-77-0; Coughlin 20-5-71-2; De Leede 13-0-68-3; Parkinson 5-1-10-1; Borthwick 1-0-2-0.

Durham First Innings	
A Z Lees not out	3
M A Jones not out	7
Extras	0
Total (no wkt, 4 overs)	**10**

*S G Borthwick, D G Bedingham, †O G Robinson, G Clark, B F W de Leede, B A Raine, M W Parkinson, P Coughlin and M V T Fernando to bat.
Bowling Leach 2-0-7-0; Pennington 2-1-3-0.
Umpires J D Middlebrook and B J Debenham.

Rachael Heyhoe Flint Trophy play-off

Beckenham South East Stars 148 (43.5 overs); The Blaze 52-2 (8.4 overs). ***The Blaze won by eight wickets (D/L method)***.

First one-day international

Mirpur New Zealand 136-5 (33.4 overs: W A Young 58, H M Nicholls 44) v Bangladesh. ***No result***.
● *three-match series level 0-0*

Golf

Cazoo French Open

Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines: Leading first-round scores (play suspended because of bad light; Great Britain and Ireland unless stated): **64** Kim Joo-hyung (S Kor). **65** R Mansell, M Southgate, A García-Heredia (Sp). **66** R Hoejgaard (Den), S Forsstroem (Swe), J Smith, A Otaegui (Sp), E Ferguson, D Law, L de Jager (SA), K Higa (Japan), R Hisatsune (Japan), A Wilson.

Rugby union

World Cup: Pool A France 96 Namibia 0 (Stade Velodrome, Marseille).

	P	W	D	L	F	A	B	Pts
France	3	3	0	0	150	25	1	**13**
Italy	2	2	0	0	90	25	2	**10**
New Zealand	2	1	0	1	84	30	1	**5**
Uruguay	2	0	0	2	29	65	0	**0**
Namibia	3	0	0	3	11	219	0	**0**

Tennis

ATP Chengdu Open

Chengdu, China: First round Lajovic (Ser) bt Z Bergs (Bel) 6-4, 1-6, 6-3; C O'Connell (Aus) bt A Kachmazov (Russ) 7-6 (7-3), 6-4; A Rinderknech (Fr) bt L Tu (Aus) 7-6 (7-5), 7-6 (8-6); J Varillas (Per) bt Jie Cui (China) 6-1, 6-3; P Sekulic (Aus) bt N Borges (Por) 7-5, 5-7, 6-3; J Thompson (Aus) bt M Purcell (Aus) 6-2, 7-6 (10-8); M Giron (US) bt A Bublik (Kaz) 7-6 (8-6), 6-3; P Kotov (Russ) bt D Galán (Col) 7-5, 7-5; M Kecmanovic (Ser) bt B Lock (Zim) 6-2, 6-3.

ATP Zhuhai Championships

Zhuhai, China: First round M Polmans (Aus) bt D Sweeny (Aus) 6-3, 6-1; K Coppejans (Bel) bt A Kovacevic (US) 7-6 (7-4), 6-1; A Karatsev (Russ) bt M Arnaldi (It) 6-7 (5-7), 7-6 (7-5), 6-2; A Bolt (Aus) bt D Schwartzman (Arg) 6-3, 4-2 ret; T Etcheverry (Arg) bt L Saville (Aus) 6-4, 6-4; C Garín (Chile) bt Zhou Yi (China) 4-6, 6-4, 6-2; A Murray (GB) bt Mo Yecong (China) 7-5, 6-3; A Muller (Fr) bt R Hijikata (Aus) 6-3, 6-2; M McDonald (US) bt Shang Juncheng (China) 6-4, 6-7 (3-7), 6-3.

WTA Guadalajara Open AKRON

Third round E Arango (Col) bt T Townsend (US) 7-5, 1-6, 6-4; M Sakkari (Gr) bt C Giorgi (It) 6-2, 6-2; L Fernandez (Can) bt E Navarro (US) 6-2, 6-3; V Azarenka (Bela) bt V Kudermetova (Russ) 6-2, 6-1; M Trevisan (It) bt O Jabeur (Tun) 6-7 (4-7), 7-5, 6-3.

WTA Galaxy Holding Group Open

Guangzhou, China: Quarter-finals G Minnen (Bel) bt L Bronzetti (It) 6-7 (8-10), 6-4, 6-1; Y Putintseva (Kaz) bt T Maria (Ger) 6-4, 6-7 (6-8), 6-0; M Linette (Pol) bt R Masarova (Sp) 7-5, 7-6 (8-6); Wang Xiyu (China) bt V Hruncakova (Slova) 6-4, 4-6, 6-3.

Fixtures

Football

Sky Bet Championship Birmingham v Queens Park Rangers (8.0).

Cinch Scottish Championship Queen's Park v Ayr (7.45).

Women's Nations League A: Group one England v Scotland (7.45). **Group three** Iceland v Wales (7.0).

Cricket

LV= County Championship: Final day of four (10.30; 80 overs minimum): **Division One: Chelmsford** Essex v Hampshire. **Emirates Old Trafford** Lancashire v Nottinghamshire. **Lord's** Middlesex v Warwickshire. **Taunton** Somerset v Kent. **Kia Oval** Surrey v Northamptonshire. **Division Two: Derby** Derbyshire v Sussex. **Leicester** Leicestershire v Yorkshire. **Worcester** Worcestershire v Durham.

Rugby league

Betfred Super League (8.0): Huddersfield Giants v Warrington Wolves; Leeds Rhinos v Castleford Tigers; Leigh Leopards v Wigan Warriors; Salford Red Devils v Catalans Dragons; St Helens v Hull; Wakefield Trinity v Hull Kingston Rovers.

Rugby union

World Cup: Pool D Argentina v Samoa (4.45, at Stade Geoffroy-Guichard, Saint-Étienne).

Premiership Cup (7.45): Gloucester v Harlequins; Newcastle Falcons v Sale Sharks.

Case of Arundell exposes mess

Alex Lowe

Rugby Correspondent, Lille



Steve Borthwick has selected an exciting England side to play Chile tomorrow, a team that are built to attack with Elliot Daly at outside centre, Marcus Smith at full back and Henry Arundell given a run on the wing with encouragement to roam, to get his hands on the ball and find some gaps in the way Chris Ashton did so brilliantly back in the day.

England could well end the game with George Ford, Owen Farrell and Smith on the field together. The creative possibilities are bountiful and if England can click they should be aiming to run up more than a half century of points against *Los Condores*, who will be proud and defiant after their remarkable journey to France, but limited.

For England supporters jumping on the train to Lille, there is much to look forward to, although everyone could do with the rain clearing up before tomorrow.

But this is very much a one-off selection. Other than perhaps Smith, there is very little chance of players being able to use this game to earn a place in the team for bigger tests to come, for Samoa in the last pool fixture or a quarter-final against Wales, Australia or Fiji.

It cannot be considered a nod to the long-term future. If anything, it is a reflection on the recent past and the present state of English rugby.

The financial crisis means that four of this 23-man squad — Arundell, David Ribbans, Jack Willis and Joe Marchant — will be ineligible for England next year because they have either been forced to join French clubs or have chosen to put their international careers on hold and accept improved contracts in the Top 14.

Player development failings mean that four of the starting tight five against Chile have eight caps or less, while Smith is playing his first game at full back. Eleven of the squad have 21 caps or fewer, including all four of those bound for France.



The 20-year-old Arundell will make his World Cup debut in Lille tomorrow

Those numbers tell a story of how the RFU allowed England to sacrifice long-term planning on the whim of Eddie Jones. Borthwick has inherited that situation.

The rugby he has had England playing thus far has not been a thing of beauty but he has laid a foundation at this World Cup. England found a way to win with 14 men against Argentina and then won ugly against Japan, basically waiting until the final quarter of the match when they knew fitness would prevail.

The fact so many people had switched off the game by that point is not, at this stage, Borthwick's concern. It should be a concern for the RFU executives, though, whose leadership of English rugby is already under intense scrutiny after a revolt from almost half of the 65 council members on behalf of the grassroots game.

The reason England are dysfunctional has its roots in the three years of decline under Jones, which was waved through unchallenged by Bill Sweeney, the chief executive.

Borthwick returned to that subject yesterday after being asked about Arundell's selection. It was a Pandora's box of a question about whether Arundell needed to show more than he did against Wales in the warm-up game and go sniffing out opportunities, or whether the onus was on England's playmakers to create more chances.

Both are actually true. Arundell, capped in Australia last year after a breakthrough season with London Irish, is still raw. He is only 20 and he has played barely 30 games of senior rugby. But his potential is huge. He just needs the confidence and experience to impose himself on games.

Emulating Ashton, using his pace and intelligence to read the game and pop up at the right time, could make him devastating, such is his electric pace. He will learn a great deal from playing with Gaël Fickou, Josua Tuisova and Christian Wade at Racing 92, although England will reap no immediate benefit.

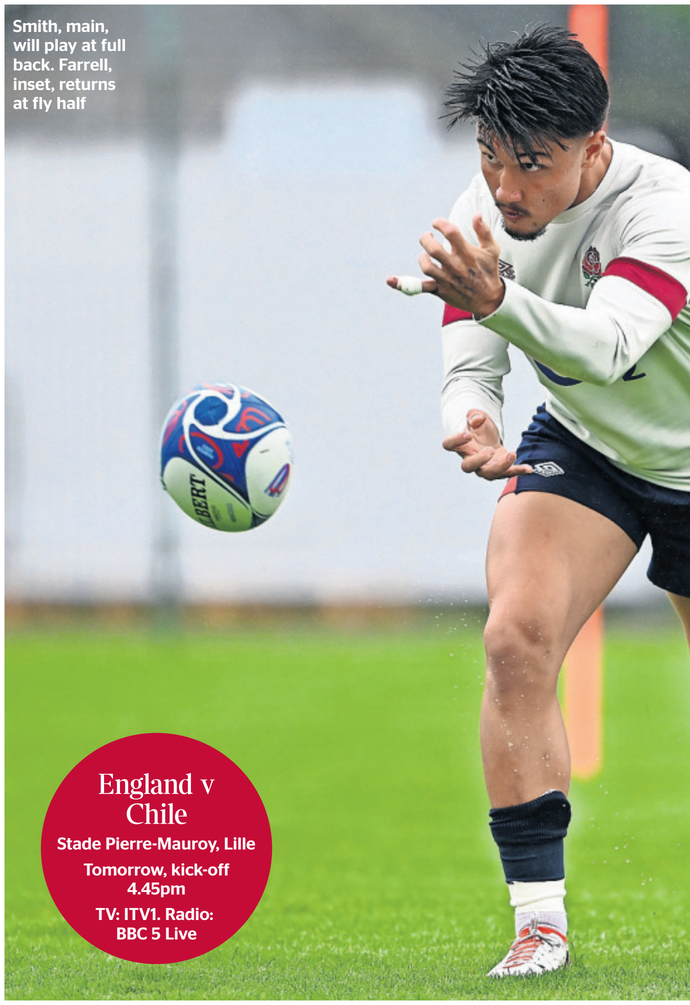
At the same time, England have been rigid and profligate in how they have played. Against Japan they created one line break in the first half and it took until the final play before the interval for Jonny May, on the wing, to get his first touch. In the end they opened up a bit, with Smith influential from full back and they scored two late tries.

Borthwick answered the Arundell question by pinning both the lack of cohesion in England's offence and the huge gulf of experience in the squad on Jones and the revolving door of attack coaches down the years.

"The team needs to play to his strengths and he [Arundell] has certainly got plenty of strengths," Borthwick said. "The players also need to find a way to bring their strengths on to the pitch and read the opportunities.

"This is what we should have been doing years ago. We should have been building this for three years: a player understanding where his No10 is, understanding how many times he's going to pop on the shoulder of the No10, inside the No10, outside the No10. Understanding how his fly half plays, understanding how his No13 plays, understanding what his full back does.

"Part of this is the cohesion with the team that we're trying to build quickly. I'm seeing aspects come and I think Henry's done really well in training. I see a lot of talent on the pitch this weekend and I see a lot of talent in this England team every weekend because I think it's a very good team.



Smith, main, will play at full back. Farrell, inset, returns at fly half

England v Chile
Stade Pierre-Mauroy, Lille
Tomorrow, kick-off 4.45pm
TV: ITV1. Radio: BBC 5 Live

"I want the ball in Henry's hands and I want players to understand how we get the ball to our players' strengths. I see development in our attack and maybe we'll see more development in our attack on the pitch on Saturday."

There will be RFU council members who will note that down as another arrow to fire at Sweeney, given the whole business model at Twickenham is built on a successful England team.

Jones has proven the folly of selecting a squad purely with the 2027 World Cup in mind. Borthwick knew his best squad contained one group of hugely experienced players and another with very few caps indeed.

Bright: We want to be world leaders on and off pitch

CONTINUED FROM BACK

England won. It is understood the senior leadership team within the squad, including the captain, Millie Bright, and Lucy Bronze, among others, were directly involved in talks with key FA figures including Mark Bullingham, the chief executive.

The players each received £150,000 in Fifa prize money for finishing as tournament runners-up, but they believed they should have received additional bonuses directly from the FA.

As The Times reported in July, there were frustrations that strict social media regulations prevented players — who earn significantly less than their male counterparts — from agreeing lucrative individual commercial deals. The FA has now acknowledged this in the back-pay agreement.

While the agreement is a significant step forward, it is understood that players are keen to continue pushing for a collective bargaining agreement (CBA) which other nations, including the United States and Australia, already have in place.

A CBA, or a similar deal, would allow player representatives to have a seat at the negotiating table when issues are initially discussed, rather than having to address each one after decisions have been made — something which contributed towards the delay in the bonuses agreement. It is hoped similar structures will also be included in the framework of the Women's Super League in future seasons.

England v Scotland
Stadium of Light
Tonight, kick-off 7.45pm
TV: ITV1

"We've come to an agreement but I think it's bigger than just the bonus," Bright said. "For us, it's about being world leaders on and off the pitch. As we know, the women's game is evolving very quickly and conversations like this need to happen in order to make sure in all areas we're at the top of our game. The conversation was extremely positive and, as players, we feel really confident moving forward about the structure that we now have in place.

"The conversations will be ongoing, moving forward, between the leadership team and the FA, with the support of the PFA [Professional Footballers' Association], and we are really positive that moving forward things will be different. But it was overall very, very good."

It is understood the England players also each received a five-figure bonus from an FA commercial partner after reaching the World Cup final.

Sarina Wiegman, the England head coach, said she was "very happy" the players and the FA had reached an agreement before the start of the inaugural women's Uefa Nations League. England play Scotland at a sold-out Stadium of Light in Sunderland tonight, before travelling to Utrecht to play Holland on Tuesday.

The Nations League lowdown

Why are England playing in it?
The old European Championship qualification format meant England and other leading nations often faced minnows, resulting in double-figure scores. The Nations League provides more competitive fixtures, while doubling up as qualification for the 2024 Olympics and Euro 2025.

Why did they not play in Rio 2016?
Team GB is a thorny issue in football, with Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland fearing that in the future they could be forced to sacrifice their independence as footballing nations. In 2016, all home nations failed to come to an agreement.

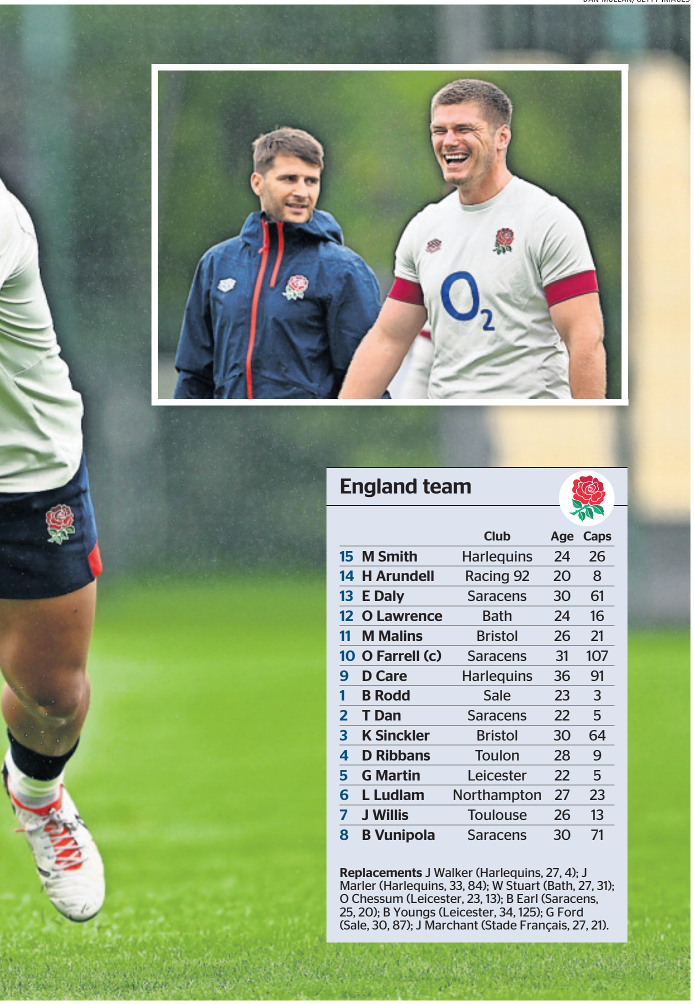
How do Team GB qualify for the Olympics?
England must first win their Nations League group, where they will face Belgium, Holland and Scotland, and then progress to the final. They could also qualify by finishing third if France, the Paris 2024 hosts, reach the final.

Why are England the qualifying nation for Team GB?
England's results alone will determine qualification because they are highest ranked of the home nations, presently fourth in the world. Scotland are 23rd, Wales 29th and Northern Ireland 47th.

Who will lead Team GB if they qualify?
The FA announced on Wednesday that the England head coach, Sarina Wiegman, would coach Team GB. She will be able to select a squad from all four of the home nations.

of Jones era

DAN MULLAN/GETTY IMAGES



England team

		Club	Age	Caps
15	M Smith	Harlequins	24	26
14	H Arundell	Racing 92	20	8
13	E Daly	Saracens	30	61
12	O Lawrence	Bath	24	16
11	M Malins	Bristol	26	21
10	O Farrell (c)	Saracens	31	107
9	D Care	Harlequins	36	91
1	B Rodd	Sale	23	3
2	T Dan	Saracens	22	5
3	K Sinckler	Bristol	30	64
4	D Ribbans	Toulon	28	9
5	G Martin	Leicester	22	5
6	L Ludlam	Northampton	27	23
7	J Willis	Toulouse	26	13
8	B Vunipola	Saracens	30	71

Replacements J Walker (Harlequins, 27, 4); J Marler (Harlequins, 33, 84); W Stuart (Bath, 27, 31); O Chessum (Leicester, 23, 13); B Earl (Saracens, 25, 20); B Youngs (Leicester, 34, 125); G Ford (Sale, 30, 87); J Marchant (Stade Français, 27, 21).

And yet, not all of them represent the future for England because of the rule about playing in France. So this is a team purely for tomorrow. It could well be a one-off opportunity at this World Cup for the likes of Arundell, Bevan Rodd and Max Malins.

They should go out and express themselves, bring some joy to the jersey. But wider analysis of the team selection paints a less rosy picture about the game back home and the job done by Twickenham executives over the past three years.

No wonder Sweeney and Tom Ilube, the RFU chairman, did not appreciate the council mounting this challenge during the World Cup.

Dupont blow mars French rout

France	96
Namibia	0

Mark Palmer Marseille



Deysel collides with Dupont, a tackle for which the Namibian received a red card

Antoine Dupont is undergoing assessment in a Marseille hospital amid fears he suffered a fracture or "crack" to his upper jaw after a head-on-head collision with Johan Deysel which resulted in the Namibia captain being sent off.

Dupont, the talisman of this French team and this tournament, left the field in clear distress five minutes into the second half, with the France head coach, Fabien Galthié, later forced to defend the decision to start his captain in what was always set to be a one-sided contest.

As he started his post-match press conference last night, Galthié announced that he was checking his phone for messages from the team medics who had accompanied Dupont to hospital. There is no clear diagnosis or prognosis at this stage, but the injury completely overshadowed Les Bleus' biggest Test win and a spectacular team display.

"There's a suspicion of a crack or fracture in his jaw," Galthié confirmed. "He's gone for tests. We'll wait for the results before moving forward. We need to take advantage of this great victory and the players' fine performance."

Asked why he had selected Dupont to begin with, then left him on the field at half-time with France 54-0 up, Galthié said simply: "This team needed and above all wanted to play."

Tomorrow the Stade Velodrome will host a papal mass but here the Marseille venue bore witness to a slaughter of biblical proportions as well as the start of a nationwide vigil over the health of Dupont. As Deysel left the field for a yellow card that the bunker official quickly upgraded to a red, the Velodrome held its collective breath. Not over the fate of the Namibia centre — it was a sending-off all day long — but what might become of Dupont. The star scrum half's medical bulletin will be the most keenly anticipated record of this match, even after France racked up their 14 tries.

If the worst is confirmed and Dupont is ruled out of the final pool match against Italy and, much more importantly, the knock-out stages, this will go down as the ultimate pyrrhic victory.

The Namibia coach, Allister Coetzee, called Deysel's tackle an "unfortunate accident". "This is the way the game's going," the former South Africa coach said. "It's unintentional, it happened so quickly. Dupont is not the tallest guy. Johan is a clean player, he's got no record of cards in the past, and he's a great defender. It's not unfair, but it's a pity it happened to him. He's the captain, he's a brave player, he's the glue of the team and he feels it."

The match itself was a blur of French brilliance as their stars came out to play — and how. After only five minutes, Damian Penaud pouched a Dupont cross-kick and scored to become the first Frenchman since Philippe Saint-André in 1995 to notch ten tries in a calendar year. Penaud went on to make it a hat-trick, while Jonathan Danty, Charles Ollivon and Louis Bielle-Biarrey all scored twice for the hosts.

France are now on the verge of sealing their place in the quarter-finals, but Dupont's readiness to last the course is the big black cloud of doubt that is hanging in the air.

Australia drop rookie fly half Gordon

Elgan Alderman Versailles

Eddie Jones is set to drop Carter Gordon to the bench for the Wallabies' must-win match against Wales on Sunday, according to reports in Australia.

Jones brought the 22-year-old to the World Cup as his only frontline fly half, leaving behind the experience of Quade Cooper, 35, and Bernard Foley, 34. Australia have struggled in many areas of their game but the performances of Gordon, at the start of his career, have drawn the most attention.

The Roar and Sydney Morning Herald are reporting Ben Donaldson will wear No 10, with Gordon on the bench, and Andrew Kellaway at full back. The team is set to be confirmed today.

Donaldson moved from full back to fly half in place of Gordon for the final half an hour of the defeat by Fiji last weekend, when Australia looked better in attack as they chased a comeback. He scored 25 points in the opening match against Georgia, including two tries, and has five caps.

Dan Palmer, the Australia lineout coach, would not commit to either fly half. "We have got two good No 10s who we are confident in and are pushing each other hard," he said. "Ben brings a bit of composure to that position, but we will pick the guy who is right for this weekend."

Australia's 22-15 defeat by Fiji has left them facing elimination in the pool stages for the first time in the tournament's history. Victory against Wales in Lyon, however, could still put Australia in a promising position to qualify.

Jones has been fiercely criticised for his selection decisions at this World Cup. Drew Mitchell, the former Wallabies wing, implored the head coach to explain his reasoning. As well as Cooper and Foley, the flanker Michael Hooper was not picked in the squad.



18+. UK only. Min speed 2.5Mbps. Lasts for 24 hours after you start watching. One Sky Sports Membership in your account at a time. Red button and interactive services aren't available. Live scheduling may be subject to change.

Proud Brighton handed tough European lesson



Henry Winter
Chief Football Writer

Brighton	*Pedro 30 (pen), 67 (pen)*	**2**
AEK Athens	*Sidibé 11, Gacinovic 39, Ponce 84*	**3**

Brighton & Hove Albion had waited so long for this first experience of European football. They have been through so much, on and off the field, falling low and rising high, that it felt a triumph simply to be staging games such as this in their rocking stadium with the past European champions Ajax and Marseille to come.

Brighton can take pride in how they have got here and now have to show they can stay here. This was a deserved defeat to canny continental campaigners, a reminder of the challenges in store and offered a lesson in combating counterattacking and well organised set pieces that Brighton will have to learn quickly. Dealing with a low block as played by AEK Athens and rugged, relentless marking, must also be learned. Brighton are a joy in possession, and there were sweeping passes wide to pick out the wingers Kaoru Mitoma and Solly March, but they were frequently swarmed over.

Brighton will also have to absorb the different styles of officiating, and a substandard Estonian referee, Kristo Tohver, made few friends or right decisions here. He booked João Pedro for diving when the Brighton striker was clearly caught, and only VAR saved Tohver. He also booked Roberto De Zerbi for complaining about a lunge at Tariq Lamptey by Milad Mohammadi that was as filthy as the weather.

Even the downpours before kick-off and towards the end of the game could not, nor should, dampen Brighton's mood. They're in Europe. They enjoyed a fine performance from Pedro, who constantly showed for the ball and dropped off to find it at times, and took his two penalties well. Simon Adingra came on for a spritely late cameo. Jason Steele made a brilliant save one-on-one and had little chance with AEK's three goals. Brighton really could have done with the defending and leadership of the injured Lewis Dunk.

ISABEL INFANTES/EPA



Pedro makes it 1-1 from the spot with Brighton's first goal in European football

AEK's intense threat on the counter, and at set pieces, reminded Brighton further of the heights they are climbing, the company they are keeping. Even the heavens briefly stopped weeping in time for kick-off, joining the party. Brighton fans whipped up a classic cup-tie atmosphere with their excitement at the fixture and expectation of another confident display. De Zerbi stood there, sporting a hoodie, exuding calm.

His team opened strongly, parading all the hallmarks of their play under the head coach: Steele controlled a dropping ball effortlessly with his instep, Igor Julio played a magnificent switch to March, Mitoma pressed Djibril Sidibe into coughing up possession, and Billy Gilmour wriggled away from Orbelín Pineda.

Yet AEK have been down this road before. They sat deep, countered and exploited set pieces. After 11 minutes, Ehsan Hajsafi delivered an outswinging corner from the left. Mitoma switched off, not spotting Sidibe's movement and the former Everton loanee connected powerfully with Hajsafi's corner from 16 yards out, sending his header flying past Steele.

AEK's suave Argentine coach, Matías Almeyda, his hair still long and scarcely unchanged since facing England at France '98, although now clad in an elegant overcoat, celebrated wildly. Almeyda had prepared his team well, seemingly also having borrowed from West Ham United's playbook. At the moment of turnover, AEK charged upfield. Levi García was a constant threat, racing behind Jan-Paul van Hecke, and denied only by Steele's smart save.

Brighton responded and equalised on the hour, although it required Tohver to realise that Hajsafi had caught Pedro. VAR spotted it and sent Tohver to the monitor, accompanied by Greeks bearing guidance. He made the shape, withdrew the caution, and Pedro duly sent Cican Stankovic the wrong way.

De Zerbi did not watch. He turned away, waiting for the fans' reaction, the leaping of supporters nearby, the staff spilling from their seats and then he turned, punching the air theatrically. Sitting nearby was Dunk and the centre back was much missed as again AEK punished Brighton at a set piece. Again it was Hajsafi delivering, again from the left, although this time from a free kick. He teased the ball between players and Steele, causing Van Hecke to stretch to try to intervene, then García, who simply helped it on to the sliding Mijat Gacinovic to restore AEK's lead with six minutes of the half remaining.

Brighton fought back and equalised again through Pedro after 25 minutes. Again, Tohver failed to spot the clear foul. This time it was a stumbling Damian Szymanski trying to hack the ball away and poleaxing Pedro. VAR again saved Tohver's blushes and Pedro went to the other side this time, putting the ball right as Stankovic again went the wrong way.

Brighton were then opened up again. Mitoma lost the ball, the tireless, combative Nordin Amrabat sent a diagonal delivery from the right, and Ezequiel Ponce flicked the ball over Lamptey and on to Niclas Eliasson, the two AEK substitutes combining well, Eliasson squaring to the unmarked Ponce, who had dashed towards the penalty spot. The Argentinian took a touch as Steele advanced and his shot struck the goalkeeper, bounced back, hit him and disappeared into the net.

It was breathless stuff. Adingra forced Stankovic into a stretching save. The fourth official then signalled 13 additional minutes, mainly for the bad injury to Hajsafi, who was carried away on a stretcher, sympathetically applauded by the 30,178 crowd. AEK handled the additional minutes well, showing all their experience. Brighton are at a new school now, a European one, and first days are often hard.

Brighton (4-3-2-1): J Steele 6 — J Milner 6 (T Lamptey 55min, 6), J-P van Hecke 5, I Julio 5, P Estupiñán 6 — S March 7, B Gilmour 6 (F Buonanotte 86), K Mitoma 6 (S Adringa 86, 6) — P Gross 7, A Fati 5 — J Pedro 9 (D Welbeck 82). **Booked** Julio, Estupiñán, Van Hecke, Welbeck.
AEK Athens (4-4-2): C Stankovic 6 — D Sidibé 6, G Mitoglou 6, D Szymanski 5, E Hajsafi 5 (M Mohammadi 60, 6) — O Pineda 6 (P Mantalo 78), J Jonsson 7, M Gacinovic 7 (N Eliasson 78) N Amrabat 6 — A Araújo 6 (S Zuber 68, 6) L García 7 (E Ponce 68, 6). **Booked** Sidibé, Szymanski, Mitoglou, Gacinovic, Mohammadi, Ponce, Mantalos.
Referee K Tohver (Est). **Attendance** 30,178.



Kudus steps forward to halt West Ham's stumble

West Ham United	*Petrovic 66 (og), Kudus 70, Soucek 82*	**3**
Backa Topola	*Stanic 47*	**1**

Tom Allnutt

For much of this contest, the glory days of Prague felt a long way away but by the end West Ham United had turned a potentially embarrassing night into a spirited victory.

"Champions of Europe, we know what we are," the West Ham supporters sang on a sodden night at the London Stadium, 105 days after Declan Rice was hoisting the Europa Conference League trophy and the club's first trophy of any kind in almost half a century.

The other prize from that momentous night was promotion to the Europa League but it hardly felt worth celebrating when TSC Backa Topola, leaders of the Serbian SuperLiga, were capitalising on Angelo Ogbonna's error to take a shock lead just after half-time.

For a while, the possibility of humiliation hung in the air but West Ham turned it around, largely thanks to Mohammed Kudus, who instigated an own goal for the equaliser before heading his team in front on his first start for the club. Tomas Soucek added a third.

David Moyes made nine changes to the team that lost to Manchester City on Saturday, with James Ward-Prowse and Lucas Paquetá the only players retained. Kudus and Konstantinos Mavropanos made full debuts after joining in the summer. Kudus may have earned himself a start against Liverpool this Sunday, even if Moyes is usually cautious with his new recruits.

"He started very well," the West Ham manager said. "He faded a little bit like the team did but came up with important goals when I couldn't see where they were coming from."

There is a theatre to Ward-Prowse's free kicks these days: the swell of anticipation after the whistle for the foul, phones being pulled out of pockets getting ready to record and the quiet as he takes each step back, like a veteran kicker at the Rugby World Cup. His early effort deflected on to the roof of the net but it served to engage the home crowd.

This was Backa Topola's first appearance in a European competition in their 113-year history but for all the Premier League's sneering at matches such as these, this is the game finding Europe's far-flung corners, not just the usual elite. For the 50-odd singing fans in the away section, it was presumably a night to remember.

Kudus was West Ham's biggest threat in the first half, with his eagerness to come inside off the right and unleash with his left foot. But despite their possession — 84 per cent of it after half an hour — West Ham's openings were more a collection of skewed, deflected and blocked shots than clear chances.

Backa Topola had barely ventured out of their own half but came within a whisker of scoring just before the break as Nemanja Stojic's header grazed the crossbar. And then three minutes after the interval, the visitors took the lead as Ward-Prowse's under-hit pass required decisive action from Ogbonna, who instead dithered and was robbed by Petar Stanic, who finished past Lukasz Fabianski. "We targeted this player," Zarko Lazetic, the Backa Topola manager, said. "Sometimes he delays his decisions so we had the feeling the ball could be stolen from him."

West Ham turned the game on its head with two goals in four minutes. First, Saïd Benrahma's cross crept in at the back post between the scrambling limbs of Kudus and Nemanja Petrovic then Kudus was given space to head in Ward-Prowse's corner. Michail Antonio should have made it three before Soucek, on as a substitute, headed in another Ward-Prowse inswinger.

West Ham (4-3-3): L Fabianski 6 — T Kehrer 7, K Mavropanos 6, A Ogbonna 6, A Cresswell 6 (Emerson 46min, 6) — L Paquetá 7 (M Cornet 86), J Ward-Prowse 7, P Fornals 6 (M Antonio 61, 7) — M Kudus 8, D Ings 6 (T Soucek 76), S Benrahma 6. **Booked** Kehrer.
Backa Topola (4-4-2): N Simic 5 — M Cvetokovic 6, G Antonic 7, M Dordevic 7 (Krstic 69), N Petrovic 6 (M Rakonjac 81) — M Radin 6, I Dakovac 6 (A Cirkovic 80), N Stojic 7, N Kuveljic 7 (M Vulic 80) — P Stanic 7, S Jovanovic 7 (M Mirchevski 90+2). **Booked** Kuveljic. **Referee** F Glova.



Kudus scored his first West Ham goal during their second-half comeback

PAUL TERRY/SPORTIMAGE/ALAMY



Ponce's late winner goes in off Steele as Van Hecke looks on

Salah adds finishing touch as Liverpool bounce back again

LASK *Flecker 14*	**1**
Liverpool *Núñez 56 (pen), Díaz 63, Salah 88*	**3**

Martin Hardy

In a victory hard-earned, on a pitch he described as "really bad", and after seeing his side come from behind once again this season, Jürgen Klopp became the first Liverpool manager to win 50 games in Europe.

In such a circumstance, his reaction to a milestone was perhaps understandably low key. "It is nice but probably is because there are much more games than in the past," he said.

He may have downplayed the achievement of moving ahead of Rafael Benítez and reaching such a milestone at a club where European football means so much, but there was at least a degree of pride in a show of resilience and finally quality from his team.

"I am really, really happy," he said of the victory. "I knew it would be difficult; it was difficult. People expect us to fly through this competition. That will not happen. It is a massive learning curve. We turned it around to get back in the game. It was well deserved."

This was a difficult night in a noisy football ground in the north of Austria. "We are here to compete," Klopp had said on the eve of his side's unwanted return to the Europa League, and Liverpool had to find the spirit their manager spoke of to see off LASK.

For the fourth time this season, they had to come from behind, trailing early before three second-half goals from Darwin Núñez, Luis Díaz and Mohamed Salah gave them victory in their opening group E encounter.

Liverpool are starting the season better than they are starting games. Whatever regret there is about a campaign outside the Champions League had to be banished to see off the bravery of a football club who did not even have a home a decade ago.

The Raiffeisen Arena has only been open for seven months and it will not have heard such noise and felt such joy as when their team, who finished third in the Austrian Bundesliga last season, took a 14th-minute lead through a super strike from Florian Flecker.

Sascha Horvath struck an angled corner to the edge of the Liverpool penalty area and from there Flecker, unmarked, unleashed a powerful drive that was heading for the corner of Caoimhin Kelleher's goal from the moment it was struck. It flew past the Irishman and delirium spilled from the stands.

Klopp, who changed his entire starting XI from Saturday's Premier League game with Wolverhampton Wanderers, giving a first start to the 17-year-old Ben Doak, knew then this would be a night for character from his side.

Those players who started at Wolves — Salah, Joe Gomez, Joël Matip, Alexis Mac Allister and Dominik Szoboszlai — were all on the pitch by the close of play.

They needed to be. Liverpool had to use their quality.

The comeback began in the 57th minute with an equaliser from the penalty spot from Núñez, who had missed chances in both halves, after Philipp Ziereis appeared to clip Díaz in the LASK penalty area.

A second was not far behind. A sweeping move saw another debutant, the £34 million summer signing Ryan Gravenberch, charge down the Liverpool right and whip over a cross that Díaz swept in with a first time, right-footed finish from the centre of the penalty area.

Klopp's celebration, spinning on his heels towards the Liverpool dugout and emphatically punching the air, spoke of significant relief.

He introduced Salah in the 74th minute and the night changed for LASK's defenders. Salah was a constant problem. Within a minute, the Egypt forward had a shot blocked and, with two minutes remaining, his quick feet and link-up with Núñez ended with Salah wriggling between two defenders and slotting past goalkeeper Tobias Lawal.

Liverpool and Klopp could finally relax — the home side were done.

"We played very bravely and we could compete against Liverpool," Thomas Sageder, the LASK head coach, said. "The team did everything. The penalty? I don't know. I have to check it. The second goal against us, I think there was a foul against us, but I need to check that too. In the second half we saw Liverpool are a top team but we fought to the end."

LASK (3-4-3): T Lawal 7 — P Ziereis 7, A Andrade 6, F Luckeneder 6 (E Dabro 80min) — F Flecker 7, B Jovicic 7, S Horvath 8, R Renner 6 (G Bello 89) — M Ljubicic 7 (M Kone 69, 4), R Zulj 6, E Havel 6 (I Mustapha 68, 4). **Booked** Ziereis, Zulj, Havel.
Liverpool (4-3-3): C Kelleher 7 — S Bajcetic 6 (J Gomez 61, 5) V van Dijk 8, I Konaté 6 (J Matip 81), K Tsimikas 7 — H Elliott 6, R Gravenberch 6 (M Salah 74), W Endo 5 (A Mac Allister 61, 5) — B Doak 5 (D Szoboszlai 61, 7), D Núñez 6, L Díaz 8.
Booked Konaté, Bajcetic.
Referee M di Bello (Ita).

NIGEL KEENE/PROSPORTS/SHUTTERSTOCK



Salah, centre, came on as a substitute and capped his cameo with the third goal

Emery contributes to Villa's downfall

Legia Warsaw *Wszolek 3, Muci 26, 51*	**3**
Aston Villa *Durán 6, Digne 38*	**2**

Europa Conference League
Charlotte Duncker

If Aston Villa thought they were going to be in for an easy ride in the Europa Conference League they were given a quick reality check in their opening group-stage game.

"Welcome to the Jungle" was the message from the Legia Warsaw fans and when Villa fell behind within two minutes it was clear this would be far from the straightforward tie they had been hoping for. Twice they came from behind thanks to goals from Jhon Durán and Lucas Digne but that was still not enough on a disappointing evening where they fell short of their usual high standards.

In Unai Emery they have the master of European football, the four-times Europa League winner managing his 100th game in Europe, but his team selection contributed to Villa's downfall; he made five changes from their Premier League team at the weekend.

"I believe in our squad and our players and we could have lost this game with other players on the pitch," Emery said, defending his team selection. "Every match away in Europe is difficult and this is a new step where we have to learn."

This was not the David v Goliath clash Warsaw's head coach Kosta Runjaic had billed it as and it took only three minutes for Villa's fragile back line to be exposed. Emery's decision to start debutant Clément Lenglet at centre back and Callum Chambers at right back contributed to a defensive nightmare for the Premier League side.

Chambers was outpaced every time Patryk Kun powered forward and the midfielder delivered a perfect ball for Pawel Wszolek to tap in unmarked from six yards out. Three minutes later, Durán headed in Villa's equaliser after a superb save from Kacper Tobiasz had pushed Nicolò Zaniolo's effort onto the bar but it was Wszolek who struck again to put the hosts back in front after more poor Villa defending.

Digne responded with a brilliant shot curled into the top corner but after Legia scored their third with Ernest Muci getting the better of Chambers and finishing into the bottom corner past Emiliano Martínez there would not be a third comeback.

Emery turned to his bench, making five changes, but still Villa could not impose themselves. Jacob Ramsey and Moussa Diaby had chances as the clock ran down but this was not to be Villa's night. David had thwarted Goliath.

Legia Warsaw (3-4-3) K Tobiasz 7 — R Pankov 7, S Kapuadi 7, Y Ribiero 7 — P Wszolek 7 (M Baku 90min), B Slisz 7, J Elitim 7 (J Celhaka 90), P Kun 7 — Josué 7, M Gual 7 (T Pekhart 67), E Muci 8 (M Rosolek 72). **Booked** Kun, Ribeiro, Tobiasz.
Aston Villa (4-4-2) E Martínez 6 — C Chambers 3 (M Cash 67), E Konsa 5, C Lenglet 4, L Digne 4 — B Kamara 6 (D Luiz 60, 6), Y Tielemans 4, J McGinn 6 (M Diaby 60, 5), L Bailey 5 — N Zaniolo 6 (J Ramsey 67, 5), J Durán 6 (O Watkins 60, 5).
Booked Zaniolo, Diaby.
Referee E Manouchos (Gre). **Attendance** 27,801.

What United must change to

Paul Hirst



After suffering their third successive defeat on Wednesday, Manchester United take on Burnley tomorrow at the start of a key period which will go a long way to defining whether their season is a success or a failure.

They have a run of favourable fixtures coming up before they play the Manchester derby at Old Trafford on October 29. After Burnley, United face Crystal Palace twice — once in the Carabao Cup and once in the Premier League — and then they face Brentford and Sheffield United, either side of Champions League home fixtures against Galatasaray and Copenhagen.

Here, we look at the areas in which United need to improve if they are to come through their sticky patch.

SHOT-STOPPING

"If the team needs me with my feet, I will be good with my feet, but first I have to save the goals, that's why I'm here," André Onana said on Tuesday evening. A little over 24 hours later, Onana lay face down on the turf at the Allianz Arena after letting in the softest of goals. Leroy Sané's shot was heading straight towards Onana, but somehow the ball squirmed underneath the goalkeeper's body and Bayern Munich took the lead.

Onana has unquestionably helped United's ability to play the ball out from the back. One of his sweeping 50-yard diagonal passes to Marcus Rashford even had the Bayern fans purring.

But, as Onana said himself, he will ultimately be judged on how successful he is in keeping the ball out of his net and he has made a poor start, conceding 14 goals in six appearances since his £47 million transfer from Inter Milan.

Watching Onana evokes memories of the difficulties that Claudio Bravo suffered in his first season at Manchester City. The Chilean's confidence was so fragile that at one point he went on a run of failing to stop six shots in a row.

Onana is a much better goalkeeper than Bravo but his statistics do not make for good reading. He has a save percentage of 64.1, which is the eighth worst in the Premier League. Onana is capable of doing much better — his save percentage with Inter last year was 76.9 and he played superbly in the Champions League final. His team-mates are rallying around the 27-year-old goalkeeper. "André is a great goalkeeper," Bruno Fernandes said. "He will keep giving us a lot of points, a lot of saves."

Premier League goalkeepers

Save percentage in all competitions*

	Appearances	Save %
A Becker (Liverpool)	5	81.8
G Vicario (Tottenham)	5	79.2
A Areola (West Ham)	5	78.8
N Pope (Newcastle)	6	76.7
W Foderingham (Sheff Utd)	5	75.7
Neto (Bournemouth)	5	74.2
B Leno (Fulham)	5	70.6
M Flekken (Brentford)	5	70
M Turner (Nottm Forest)	6	69.2
Ederson (Man City)	7	68.8
J Sá (Wolves)	5	66.7
R Sánchez (Chelsea)	6	64.7
J Pickford (Everton)	6	64.3
A Onana (Man Utd)	**6**	**64.1**
A Ramsdale (Arsenal)	5	61.5
E Martínez (Aston Villa)	5	60.9
T Kaminski (Luton)	4	60
J Trafford (Burnley)	4	58.6
S Johnstone (C Palace)	6	47.1

*Season 2023-24

DETERMINATION

Onana's team-mates did not help him much on Wednesday. United were far too open, which will be of concern to Erik ten Hag. When the Dutchman took over, he made it clear that he expected his players to work hard off the ball. More than a year on, he watched Rashford give up after attempting the meekest of challenges on Sané before he shot at Onana. There were other instances in which Rashford and others — including Scott McTominay — tracked back with little enthusiasm.

It is remarkable that Ten Hag's message about pressing and tracking back has not got through to his players even though he has been in charge for more than a year.

FITNESS

United are hoping that their new head of sports medicine, Gary O'Driscoll, will help to solve their injury crisis. O'Driscoll will be on the bench for the first time at Turf Moor, after seeing out his notice period with Arsenal.

United have been without a full-time club doctor since Steve McNally left to join the referees' body, the PGMOL, in February. Jim Moxon had taken the role on an interim basis and will now help O'Driscoll to settle into his new role.

O'Driscoll, the cousin of former Ireland rugby great Brian O'Driscoll, arrives at Old Trafford having earned a reputation as one of the most respected medical men in the game. He had a good working relationship with Mikel Arteta at Arsenal and the Spaniard tried to persuade him to stay, but O'Driscoll, a United fan originally from the North West, decided to move to Old Trafford.

United need his expertise more than ever. Ten Hag was without nine players due to injury on Wednesday. Luke Shaw, Aaron Wan-Bissaka and Tyrell Malacia are out until November while Raphaël Varane and Mason Mount have muscular injuries. Harry Maguire reported discomfort after Tuesday's training session and was unable to travel to Munich. Kobbie Mainoo and Amad Diallo have not recovered from injuries suffered in pre-season while Sofyan Amrabat has still not made his United debut due to a back problem.

MIDFIELD

Ten Hag said at one stage last season that matches are won and lost in midfield, so it should come as no surprise that United's poor run has coincided with a period of uncertainty in that area. United were overrun in midfield against Brighton and Bayern had little trouble passing through them on Wednesday.

Due to the injury crisis, Ten Hag has had to chop and change, starting in the first three matches with a three-man midfield of Casemiro, Mount and Fernandes. Mount is a good technical player but he had little impact because he was playing so deep. For the Arsenal and Bayern defeats, Ten Hag switched from 4-3-3 to 4-2-3-1 and played Christian Eriksen alongside Casemiro, with Fernandes as the No 10. Eriksen and Casemiro struggled to match the energy levels of their younger opponents.

In the Brighton match, Ten Hag opted for a diamond, with Eriksen and McTominay sandwiched between Fernandes and Casemiro. With so many changes, it is no surprise that United have looked so unsettled. Perhaps one solution that Ten Hag would consider when he has all his players available would be to deploy Amrabat, a tenacious and technical player, alongside Casemiro as a double pivot and then play Mount on the right. That slot is vacant because Antony has been given a leave of absence to deal with assault claims, which he denies, and because of the manager's spat with Jadon Sancho.



Abject start leaves Ten Hag fearing winter of discontent

Bayern defeat showed United are a long way from being challengers on any front, says **Martin Samuel**



The last time Manchester United conceded three goals or more in three consecutive games was during a period known as the winter of discontent. The fear for Erik ten Hag is that a similar season is yet to come. His team have lost four games already in this campaign and, technically, it's not even autumn yet.

December, 1978. A Labour government, led by James Callaghan, was under siege from a series of strikes by private and public sector unions. A lorry drivers' strike, in particular, caused havoc — this newspaper was also out for a year, as a result of a strike called by my then future father-in-law, but I digress — and at the BBC there was a threat to the much anticipated Christmas schedule.

At the same time Manchester United, managed by Dave Sexton, hit the skids. Specifically their bad run began with a 3-0 loss away to Bolton Wanderers on Friday, December 22, moved through a defeat by the same margin at home to Liverpool on Boxing Day and culminated in Manchester United 3 West Bromwich Albion 5 on Saturday, December 30. No doubt there were stalwarts trying to put a gloss on a high-scoring spectacle that day too. This was, after all, the fixture described by Gerald Sinstadt on Granada Television as the "Game of the Century". Many regard it as the peak performance of West Brom's triumvirate of Cyrille Regis, Laurie Cunningham and Brendon Batson. Cunningham, in particular, was exceptional, rising above concerted racist abuse to play a pivotal role.

So United got away with it, a little bit. Everyone was so enchanted with West Brom's display that United's slump was lost in the plaudits and celebrations. The reality can be found in the final 1978-79 league table, mind. West Brom finished third, Manchester United ninth; 14 points separated the teams.

In that respect, it was a little like Wednesday night's game. In black and white, Bayern Munich 4 Manchester United 3 doesn't look so bad. A defeat at one of the fortresses of Europe by the odd goal in seven, with Rasmus Hojlund finally off the mark and one of Bayern's goals a contentious handball penalty that would probably not have been awarded in the Premier League.

Yet it's not the whole story. Wind back to 1978 and that game with West Brom was fairly even. There were 19 minutes when Manchester United were ahead, 16 minutes when West Brom led and 55 minutes when the match was level. It's an example of a game that could have gone either way.

At the Allianz Arena, the match was level for 28 minutes and Bayern led for the remaining 62. United were never ahead. Apart from a lively start — much like against Brighton & Hove Albion on before the roof fell in — this was Bayern's night all the way.

There is a lot of whistling to keep the spirits up going on at Old Trafford right now, around tight calls against Arsenal, and injury lists, and that handball against Christian Eriksen. Yet anyone who has followed the Champions League knows Uefa's infringement rules are sterner than they are here. This has gone United's way in the past — remember the game against Paris Saint-Germain under Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, arguably a greater controversy — but did not in Munich.

The fact remains, however, that United's defences are far too easily breached. Wolverhampton Wanderers demonstrated that on the first day of the season, and little has changed over a month later.

And Bayern are a much better side than Wolves, so when they got through, they made it count. As did Arsenal, eventually, as did Brighton, as did Tottenham Hotspur — and as will Burnley unless United smarten up their act tomorrow. United have not lost at Turf Moor since 2009 — Jonny

save their season

ALEX GRIMM/GETTY IMAGES



Onana has made a poor start at United, conceding 14 goals in six appearances

Evans played, as he could this week — but a repeat is no longer unthinkable. Manchester United have now lost 18 of their past 35 away matches in all competitions, and only West Ham United have a poorer record among clubs that have been in the Premier League throughout that time.

Equally worrying is that the spine of the team that should hold firm, that should prevent defeats, arrived on Ten Hag's watch: Casemiro and Lisandro Martínez and, more recently, the goalkeeper André Onana, who is only an improvement on David de Gea so far in terms of his distribution, which is excellent.



Ten Hag's side have conceded at least three goals in three consecutive games

United have conceded 14 goals from 39 shots on target this season. For every 2.7 shots at Onana's goal, one goes in.

This is unsustainable if United are to mount a serious challenge in any major competition. It is unsustainable if fans are to realise their desire for a change of ownership. The sale of the club has dragged on and now there is a suggestion that suitors will not pay the Glazers' present asking price, yet alone the higher one that is believed to be their new bottom line.

For all the club's wealth — and who else could blow £1 billion in the transfer market, win nothing greatly special and keep going — there seems so much work still to be done.

Sofyan Amrabat may seal a porous midfield but, let's face it, this is a player yet to kick a ball in the Premier League. Enzo Fernández was impressive in a similar position for Argentina at the World Cup — where Amrabat was outstanding for Morocco — and has hardly hit the ground running at Chelsea.

It is very hard to adapt instantly to the fury of the Premier League. Hojlund looks useful but is still waiting for his first goal in the domestic game. A lot of pressure is being placed on inexperienced shoulders to turn United's season around.

So when is autumn 2023? Tomorrow. This is based on the position of the sun in relation to the Earth and changes each year — a phenomenon known as the autumn equinox. This year, it is September 23. So Manchester United have lost four games and it's still summer. That's a lot of potential discontent between now and a long, cold winter.

I'm open to selling stake in Tottenham, says chairman Levy

Gary Jacob

Daniel Levy has confirmed he is open to selling a stake in Tottenham Hotspur and that the club have the funds to re-sign Harry Kane.

The Tottenham chairman is believed to value the club at about £4 billion and would consider selling up to 25 per cent. In January he met Nasser Al-Khelaifi, the president of Paris Saint-Germain and chairman of Qatar Sports Investments, and Spurs was subject to interest from the private equity fund MSP Sports Capital, one of many parties in recent years.

Levy and his family own a 29.88 per cent stake in Enic, the investment company which owns 86.58 per cent of Tottenham. The remaining 13 per cent is owned by 30,000 small shareholders. "I've got no real interest to leave Tottenham, but I have a duty to consider anything that anyone may want to propose," Levy said. "It's not about me, it's about what's right for the club.

"We run this club as if it's a public company. If anyone wants to make a serious proposition to the board of Tottenham we would consider it, along with our advisers, and if we felt it was in the interests of the club we would be open to anything."

Spurs posted a net debt of £626 million in the latest company accounts, in part due to the building of a stadium that cost £1 billion. Interest on the debt was £22.2 million in 2021-22, an outlay which will have risen as interest rates have increased over the past year.

When the stadium was being built, Tottenham envisaged that some of the repayments would be paid for by a naming-rights deal. Now Levy has suggested that finding a stadium sponsor is not crucial, a year on from talks with Google. "We're not as tied to doing it now as perhaps we would have been," he said.

Levy said the £100 million agreement to sell Harry Kane to Bayern Munich during the summer contained a buy-back clause. "All I would say is that if one day Harry wanted to come back to the Premier League, and he wanted to come to Tottenham, we would have the ability to purchase him," Levy said.



Levy revealed that Spurs have a Kane buy-back clause

Tottenham are expected to trigger an option to extend Son Heung-min's contract by one year until 2026, although there is no pressing need to increase the forward's deal in the short term.

Meanwhile, Tottenham's chief scout Leonardo Gabbanini has left the club, paving the way for the appointment of a new director of football, a position that is likely to absorb the chief scout role.

Rise in TV games would mean more Saturday night matches

Martyn Ziegler Chief Sports Reporter

Premier League clubs are aiming for another increase in TV money with the biggest rise in live matches being available to domestic broadcasters since its formation — and confirmation that overseas rights income guaranteed for 2025-28 is already higher than for this three-year period.

The clubs were told at a shareholders meeting in London yesterday that there is a proposal for the number of live games to rise from 200 to 265, although sources say that there is a range from 260 to 270. A vote on the final figure will take place next week and is likely to mean more matches at 7.45pm on Saturdays — under the existing deal there are only eight games at that time. The Premier League has ruled out Sunday evening kick-offs, however.

Clubs were told the number of TV packages could drop from seven to five, with about 225 "premium" games and four entire rounds of matches totalling 40 games that are played in midweek or bank holidays. It is understood, however, that there is no final decision yet.

The extra domestic matches are aimed at securing more and higher bids from broadcasters in the auction that is expected to take place before the end of the year. The total domestic broadcast income from 2022-25 is £5.1 billion.

After the Premier League's launch in 1992, only 60 of the 380 matches a season were screened live to domestic audiences. That rose to 106 in 2001, 138 in 2007, 154 in 2013, 168 in 2016 and 200 in 2019. The extra games will mean that from 2025-26, 70 per cent of matches will be screened live; in effect, only 3pm games on Saturdays will not be aired.

'Long way to go' in Everton sale

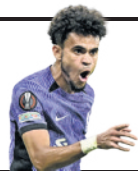
Paul Joyce
Northern Football Correspondent

Everton's prospective new owners, 777 Partners, have told the manager Sean Dyche that their planned takeover has a "long way to go" during face-to-face discussions this week.

Dyche's future was not on the agenda during the meeting at the club's Finch Farm training headquarters, which was attended by 777's co-founder Josh Wander and chief executive, Don Dransfield. The Miami-based company has an agreement with the Everton owner, Farhad Moshiri, to buy his 94.1 per cent stake, but must receive approval from the Premier League, FA and Financial Conduct Authority before the takeover can go ahead.

That process will be a lengthy one and Dyche, who attended along with Kevin Thelwell, the director of football, said: "They made it clear to those of us who were in the meeting that the deal has a long way to go to its finality. It will take time with the fit and proper tests [the Premier League's owners' and directors' test]. They were more getting a feel of what my thoughts were, and our thoughts, rather than giving any directives on what they are planning."

Sport



A mixed night in Europe

Wins for Liverpool and West Ham but Brighton and Villa lose

Pages 66-67



Borthwick set to stick with Farrell

England head coach backs his under-pressure captain to start for the rest of World Cup

Will Kelleher
Deputy Rugby Correspondent, Lille

Steve Borthwick has strongly indicated that Owen Farrell will be in his first-choice side for the rest of the World Cup and will captain England despite the performances of Courtney Lawes and George Ford.

Farrell, 31, will come straight back into the starting XV at fly half for the match against Chile in Lille tomorrow. He replaces Ford, who has been rotated to the bench and officially named a vice-captain. Ford has been England's star player in their wins against Argentina and Japan and was widely praised for his performances. Lawes, meanwhile, has led the team with aplomb.

The Chile match will be Farrell's first since he was banned for four weeks for a dangerous tackle on the Wales back-rower Taine Basham in August. Borthwick confirmed that Farrell will be the skipper for future Tests.

"I picked Owen as captain back in June and have been very clear on that," Borthwick said. "It's fantastic to have Owen back on the field. Owen has been an incredible leader for this team, even though he hasn't been able to be part of a matchday 23. The way he has helped this team through the first rounds has been fantastic and we're looking forward to seeing him back.

"What I think Owen does is firstly [inspire with] the example he sets, which is second to none, and he is somebody you can follow by example. Secondly, his ability to harness all of those people and bring them all to be influential leaders within the squad is a real skill.

"He is a little bit older [than other players] and they look up to him. He's a mentor, and he's a great voice for myself as well, to us and the coaching team, in what he gives to the programme."

Farrell, 31, is determined to make an impact, having missed the first two matches. "It's been tough-ish not playing, but it's been brilliant to see how well the lads have been doing and I can't wait to be part of it," he said. "I wouldn't describe myself as a good watcher. I don't detach myself. I'm knackered by the end, to be honest. Especially after that first one [against Argentina]. I feel every emotion that goes with it, sometimes even more than I would if I was playing."

Borthwick is keen to reunite Ford and Farrell at fly half and inside centre against Chile. "They've been a great partnership in the past," Borthwick said. "They have known each other for a very long time and you have seen the way they can work together. Will we see [them] at No 10 and No 12? That could happen at some point. What a brilliant position to be in, to have that possibility."

Farrell is joined in the XV by Marcus Smith, who wears the No 15 shirt for the first time. Elsewhere Henry Arundell, Max Malins and Jack Willis earn their World Cup debuts, while Billy Vunipola starts at No 8.

Alex Lowe's analysis, page 64

CHRISTOPHE SIMON/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



France fears a Dupont disaster

World Cup's best player taken to hospital with a suspected fracture of upper jaw as win over Namibia comes at a potentially huge cost for hosts, page 65

Lionesses get £4.25m payday

Molly Hudson

England's players will receive £800,000 after reaching an agreement with the FA over bonuses, taking the squad's earnings from the Women's World Cup to £4.25 million.

England made history by reaching their first Women's World Cup final in August, losing 1-0 to Spain in Sydney. A row over bonuses had dominated the build-up and the players chose to pause talks during the tournament so they could focus on playing.

Discussions held this week, which both sides described as positive and constructive, have resulted in players receiving a collective sum of around £800,000, which covers their World Cup bonus as well as historic commercial payments the players believed they had been owed since the European Championship last summer, which

Continued on page 64

Europe's plan to share balls

Rick Broadbent

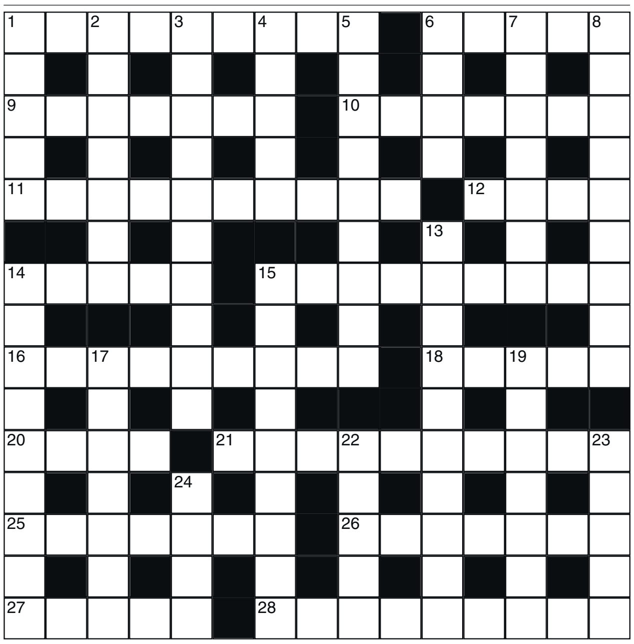
Europe's Ryder Cup players have been practising with their team-mates' golf balls in an attempt to avoid the last-minute pairings reshuffle that affected the build-up in 2021.

Luke Donald, Europe's captain, wanted the core of his team to have as much notice as possible about the different balls they might have to use before drawing up potential pairings for the foursomes in Rome next week.

Some players struggle to play with unfamiliar balls due to nuances in flight, spin and speed. Two years ago, on the eve of the match at Whistling Straits, that caused a dramatic late change to the plan to pair Viktor Hovland and Matt Fitzpatrick and Paul Casey with Lee Westwood. Padraig Harrington, Europe's captain in 2021,

Continued on page 60

Times Crossword 28,715



ACROSS

1 What can calm taken by mouth mostly? Sleeping draught perhaps (9)
6 Lie about strength of character (5)
9 What makes round brown circle in sampler (7)
10 Horse and knight advance in battle (7)
11 Copy Martin, perhaps, as a name from an earlier generation (10)
12 Reported murderer for punishment (4)
14 Type of work aspiration for Cockney artist (5)
15 Shade regularly keeps spinning endlessly in grave (9)
16 Series of shots initially are downed easily after a lot of pasta (9)
18 Special constable not allowed to reconnoitre (5)
20 Shut up about old farm worker (4)
21 Bird, one very loud, at first calling hidden in cut hay (10)
25 Occupy hotel, soon to go outside (7)
26 Still to be evaluated back on Manchester United ground (7)
27 Druidic council axing hollow dead shrub (5)
28 Bug within pelt one put away (9)

DOWN

1 Places erected including European institute (3,2)
2 What child may do with penny toy (7)
3 Judiciously restrict the consumption of supporter (10)
4 Raid gold in possession of fairy (5)
5 Entrust to support group making decisions (9)
6 First-rate tarts turned out light (4)
7 "British" and "English" align badly in a foreign tongue (7)
8 Work in copper, perhaps making a bolt? (9)
13 Lawyer's dull discourse upset court (10)
14 Children start well (9)
15 Sight pâté being prepared for this dish (9)
17 Surround with small dam (7)
19 Local drink has never to be tipped in flute (7)
22 Down with viral infection following start of freeze (5)
23 Sweet — for instance doughy pudding — not finished up (5)
24 Priest born in Lincoln? (4)

The Times Crossword Championship 2023 will be held on Saturday October 21. For further information see times-event.com/crossword-championship

Yesterday's solution 28,714

E	X	I	T		C	H	E	W	E	D	O	V	E	R
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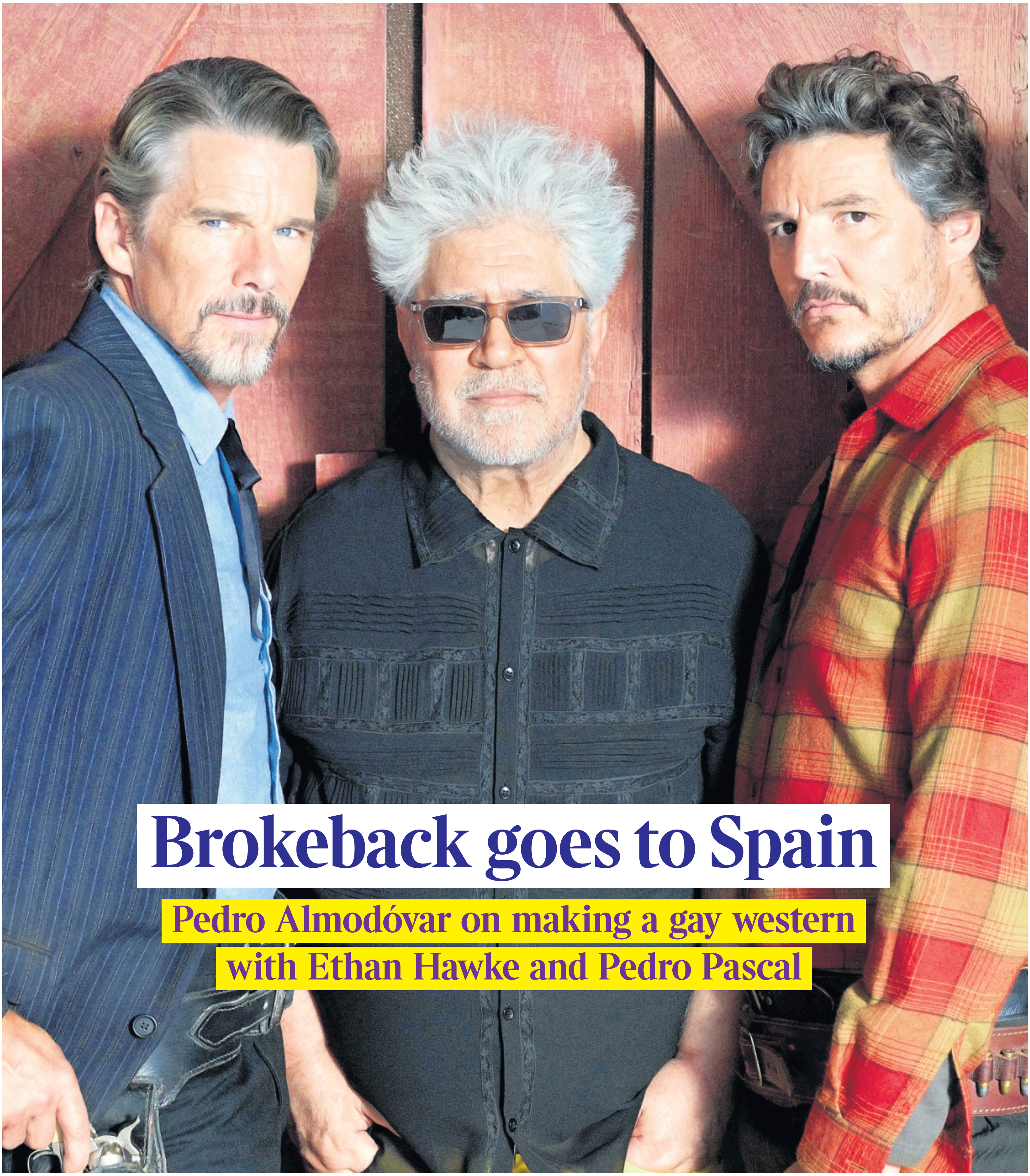
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2 ARTS

September 22 | 2023



Brokeback goes to Spain

Pedro Almodóvar on making a gay western with Ethan Hawke and Pedro Pascal



Caitlin Moran's Celebrity Watch

6 Paul Hollywood



Good morning, dear Times reader, and welcome to the week where summer suddenly ended in heavy downpours and localised flooding, ie like the rest of summer has been.

For those missing the warmth of the sun, we must turn instead to the warmth of love and the news that Paul Hollywood, Mr Sexy Bread himself, 57, has married for a second time, wedding Melissa Spalding, 39. Hollywood's found love again after the "hoo-ha years" of being unfaithful to his wife, then going out with that 22-year-old barmaid from his local pub — so HURRAH for his new season of more age-appropriate love!

But is it hurrah? In advance of the big day, The Sun seemed worried about one aspect of the wedding in Cyprus: "*Bake Off*'s Paul Hollywood prepares to marry girlfriend at posh resort — where he met his ex-wife."

"People privately think it's odd he's marrying here because he has so many memories of his first wife connected to the hotel," an "insider", who definitely exists, said. "What must Melissa think? She's following in the same footsteps where he had another woman on his arm."

Although the "insider" didn't know Spalding well enough to have any quotes from her, the sentiment was clear. Getting to marry Paul Hollywood = GOOD. In a place he'd visited with another woman = BAD.

But is it? Obviously we're all different, but by the time a woman reaches 39 and is ready to marry Paul Hollywood, it's very likely she's lived through enough friends' weddings to know what a complete pain in the arse they are. Visiting different venues, trying different menus — engaging in the giddy lunacy of trying to arrange a totally "unique" wedding that involves different countries, clothes and entertainments from all the other 474,759,757,575 their social circle have engaged in.

I have to say, in these circs, if my fiancé was like, "Babe, I've been here with a wife before, the calamari's top-notch — plus I'll probs get a discount," I'd be like, "Fab. Book it."

The greatest wedding gift a woman can receive, surely, is a wedding she doesn't have to organise at all.

5 Porridge

As a baker who is more emotionally invested in grains than the rest of us, it's possible that Hollywood has been aware of a massive grain-based controversy that broke out this week.

Living in a world where everything from dogs to speed limits is a pyroclastically hot topic right now, many of us had hoped that something as boring as porridge would continue to be a not-button issue. Alas, that hope is dead. Or as MailOnline broke it to us: "Cardiologist reveals why oatmeal should NOT be your go-to breakfast."



Yes, over on TikTok a "row" has broken out over whether or not oatmeal/porridge is either a) great or b) a dog's ass.

"A cardiologist has sparked controversy on TikTok for claiming oatmeal has 'no nutritional value' and 'is just propaganda'," MailOnline reported. "Dr Jack Wolfson, who goes by the name Natural Heart Doctor on social media, posted a video earlier this month about why he never recommends eating oatmeal … The video, which has gained more than 4.6 million views, received backlash from doctors and dieticians who claimed Dr Wolfson is spreading misinformation and ignoring oatmeal's health benefits."

"As a cardiologist, I never recommend eating oatmeal, certainly not every day as so many people do," Wolfson told his 449,000 followers. "Our ancestors did not eat oatmeal. Neither should you."

Wow. Well, I never thought I would live to see the day the evils of Big Porridge were unmasked, but here we are. Of course, while it might well be that Wolfson is the first brave whistleblower, I am somewhat sceptical about his first line of attack against the biggest ingredient in Hobnobs. "Our ancestors didn't eat oatmeal. Neither should you" is a bizarre gambit from a cardiologist given that our ancestors also didn't have cardiologists. Wolfson presumably thinks they're a good thing.

I honestly don't think that, as a species, we have the bandwidth for the Porridge Wars right now. On this issue, as with so many others, we need a centre ground: someone whose take on porridge isn't too hot, or too cold, but just right.

4 Married at First Sight



To MailOnline, which had an "exclusive" story about how three contestants from the modish Channel 4 show *Married at First Sight* have "partied" so hard during filming breaks that lawyers had to be called in to negotiate new contracts.

After a party that got out of hand, the trio were reprimanded for their "riotous" behaviour, while the new legal document stipulated that they weren't allowed to "venture" into central London again and had to stay in their pre-agreed accommodation — an apartment block in Wembley.

Just one thing here, I guess. If Channel 4 really wants to prioritise quiet, cautious, socially conforming people as contestants, I wouldn't go looking for them in a cohort of folk so extrovert and piratical that they're willing to marry on a TV show an absolute stranger they've never set eyes on before. That is not your "quiet night in, maybe a quick whip-round with the Hoover" gang.

3 King Charles



A quick cast list recap before we go into this next story. Rob McElhenney is the American actor and comedian behind the sitcom *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia*, whose fame has gone up several notches since he, along with the *Deadpool* star Ryan Reynolds, whimsically purchased Wrexham AFC, then chronicled the football team's rise in the documentary series *Welcome to Wrexham*.

King Charles is, well, King Charles, aka Prince Charles for those of us slow to embrace change.

To the story, then, and the wave of astonishment that will have hit many on reading the headline "King Charles delights fans with subtle *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia* joke to Rob McElhenney". The monarch met the comedian in Wales last year at Wrexham's ground in an encounter filmed for series two of *Welcome to Wrexham*.

Astonishment? Well, as anyone who has watched *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia* will know, it's a show that doesn't pull its punches, topic or humour-wise. Plots have included incest and crack addiction, while a whole episode featured a character played by Danny DeVito being accused of having done a poo in a bed. In a world where King Charles is suddenly doing callbacks to *It's Always Sunny* jokes, his options could have included him shouting the punchline "FROM EATING BAD PUSSY" — and while we know King Charles is a fan of "humour", and can do Neddie Seagoon impressions at will, this seems unexpectedly edgy from the septuagenarian monarch.

Anyway, I read on and found out that the King's *Always Sunny* "joke" was McElhenney referring to the fact he used to live in Philadelphia and the King replying, "I hear it's always sunny there!" Which is definitely more appropriate and on brand, but also quite disappointing.

2 Peruvian aliens



You may remember that last week Celebrity Watch featured the two "alien" bodies that were presented to the frankly bewildered Mexican congress by a UFO investigator called Jaime Maussan. Although always keen to remain open-minded and full of intergalactic wonder, like Professor Brian Cox, I did note that the "bodies" looked uncannily similar to ET, which seemed a bit of a coincidence.

Anyhoo, some developments: the Peruvian government issued a statement that ran along the lines of "Hang on — you said those 'aliens' were found in a cave in Peru. We're Peru! We never said you could have our aliens! Also — they're not aliens."

Or, as the Peruvian culture minister, Leslie Urteaga, put it: "There is now a

criminal complaint from the ministry of culture against some people who had a relationship with these gentlemen."

Aside from learning that these not-aliens were stolen from another country, another heady fact has been thrown into the mix: Maussan has given the "bodies" names. And what are they? Clara and Mauricio. Claire and Maurice.

I'm kind of back on board with Maussan now. *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* never had the balls to call any of the aliens Maurice. Presumably because … he's a space cowboy?

1

Russell Brand

Well, here it is — the biggest celebrity story of the week, the month and maybe the year. Huw Edwards's moment of scrutiny consisted of a few frankly bland texts and resulted in no criminal charges. The Schofepocalypse was, admittedly, shades darker but also resulted in no criminal charges.

However, at the time of writing four women have made allegations of sexual assaults to reporters, and one other woman has reported her claims of assault to the Met Police, and the joint investigation by Channel 4, The Times and The Sunday Times — a solid, three-year effort that will have been, to use the technical term, lawyered up to the wazoo — seems to be prompting even more women to come forward with their stories.

The allegations against Brand — which he vehemently denies — are countless degrees more serious than those against either Edwards or Schofield, involving allegations of a 16-year-old girl being picked up from school in a BBC car and sexually choked; rape; legal threats; and multiple employers turning a blind eye. Brand has said that the allegations pertain to a time when he was "very very promiscuous" but that his relationships "were absolutely, always consensual". He has said that he does not mind his promiscuity being discussed but "seriously refutes" what he describes as "very very serious criminal allegations".

If even one of the stories is true, Brand — the man who, in his first memoir, describes losing his virginity at the age of 17 to a sex worker hired by his father while his father had sex with two other sex workers in the same room, and surmised that "my sexuality had morphed forever from bewildered innocence, into something more complex and rapacious" — is a sexually damaged man who has combined a career of cheerfully consensual shagging allegedly with a sideline in something much darker.

The screengrabs of Brand's texts to one of his alleged victims where he says, "I'm sorry. Obviously this was a bad [decision]. I'm embarrassed by my behaviour," after allegedly raping a woman without a condom, before reassuring her she won't need "testing" at an STD clinic and that he will "make it up to her", seem pertinent, as is the fact his alleged victim is documented as having attended a rape clinic later that day.

This was all back in 2012, and there appears to be an electronic and paper trail: a cold and uncomfortable fact for those defenders of Brand who claim these allegations are all a plot to "bring him down" for "telling the truth" about eg Covid vaccines and aliens on his YouTube channel.

In 2012 Brand was still the darling of the left — he'd been a columnist on The Guardian and assiduously courted by Labour. Indeed, as all the claims made so far predate Brand's pivot to right-wing conspiracy theories — there are no allegations of coercive or illegal behaviour after 2013 — this rather blows a hole in his fans' logic. On paper, it seems that the more left-wing, liberal and "mainstream" Brand was — a regular on the BBC and Channel 4; interviewed on *Newsnight*; guest-editing The New Statesman; starring in big Hollywood movies — the greater the frequency of the allegations.

If you really want to die on the hill of suggesting Brand is the "victim" of the "mainstream media", your best and most logical through-line would be suggesting it was the "mainstream media" that appeared to enable, blind-eye and, in many cases, encourage his behaviour towards women. Since he has been on YouTube in a beanie hat spouting pro-Putin propaganda about Ukraine, we've heard no more about "Mr Winkie", as he used to refer to his penis. Perhaps conspiracy theories have replaced sex addiction. In the end, both are a cheap, manipulative way of feeling both power and validation.

But now that the police are looking into claims about Brand's treatment of women, and with YouTube suspending the monetisation from his lucrative channel, it looks like he will have to find a new way to feel these things. I know this idea seems impossible to a certain kind of man but maybe, ultimately, true human contentment won't involve getting "thousands" of women into bed, whatever the means, or earning millions of pounds. It's about being silent, and alone, and comfortable with your emotions.



North West's daubings would be best on the Kardashian fridge

Laura Freeman

"It took me four years to paint like Raphael," Picasso said, "but a lifetime to paint like a child." As a quote it's probably apocryphal, but it's also profound. Nursery daubs have a freedom that is lost by secondary school and its stifling still-life set-ups to be drawn with a 2B pencil.

When my ten-month-old daughter gets going on the finger paints or goes abstract expressionist with the yoghurt and cherries on her highchair tray, I stand and marvel. What an eye! Every one a winner, every mess a masterpiece. Another hit for the gallery/fridge.

So I have some sympathy for Kim Kardashian, who proudly posted a canvas by her ten-year-old daughter North to her 364 million followers on Instagram. "North has been working on this sunset landscape painting for a few weeks and it turned out so beautiful," Kardashian wrote. "I'm so proud of my baby."



@KIMKARDASHIAN/INSTAGRAM

North West's painting and, below, with her mother, Kim Kardashian

> **Even if you try to go it alone, critics will cry 'nepo baby'**

The comments are a mix of the rapturous, the incredulous (too good to be true) and the nasty. More than one person has pointed out that it's too pink to hang on the walls of Kardashian's white, white house. More interesting is the free-and-easy Auerbach-like canvas propped behind North's easel. That's the one I'd want on my walls.

Who'd Be the Child of Celebrity Parents, Part 765. Normal mums and dads just say, "Well done, darling," and commission the family Christmas card. Famous mums and dads turn your canvases into content.

Even if you try to go it alone, critics will cry "nepo baby". And they may be right that connections have trumped talent. Brooklyn Beckham, in his 2017 book of collected photographs, admitted that his chosen subject and medium had their challenges.

"Elephants in Kenya. So hard to photograph, but incredible to see," he wrote, offering insights from behind the lens. He might have taken the advice of Henri Cartier-Bresson, who argued for practice and experience with the pithy: "Your first 10,000 photographs are your worst."

When Rocco Ritchie, son of Madonna and the film director Guy Ritchie, launched his artistic career aged 21 last year he did so under the pseudonym "Rhed". His gallery's puff talked of Rocco/Rhed as a "new Basquiat", somewhat missing the point that much of the American artist Jean-Michel Basquiat's wildness and dynamism came from his upbringing on and off the streets of 1980s Brooklyn.

Sleeping on flat beds in first class is not the same as sleeping on benches in Washington Square Park. Rhed's paintings weren't bad, but they weren't really his. It was as if he had swallowed the Big Book of 20th-Century Art Hits and done something Matisseish, something Picassoesque and something vaguely vorticist.

There was much merriment a few years ago when Dan Crowe, a former magazine editor, set up a business offering a professional (pastiched, tongue-in-cheek) critique of the efforts of middle-class mini Monets. For £190, Crowe penned a critical write-up of your child's potato prints in convincingly esoteric-pretentious art speak.

Last September, the ten-year-old Andre Valencia made headlines with *Invasion of Ukraine* — a modern response to Picasso's *Guernica*. The American fifth-grader is the youngest artist to have shown at the Art Miami fair, he is represented by Chase Contemporary in Manhattan and his paintings command prices as high as $125,000.

On the Chase Contemporary website, Valencia's work is described as "deeply influenced by Cubism" and "inspired by Francisco Goya, Pablo Picasso, George Condo, and Salvador Dalí". There's the issue: "influenced" and "inspired". What makes Valencia's art Valencia's? Too soon to tell.

North may have a knack, but she's still only ten and the internet can be a discouraging place. Parents can be proud without posting. And American fridges are famously huge.



cover story

Richard Morrison

A night in the West End with SJP for £395 a ticket? Why not?



How much do you pay for a haircut? I fork out £15 for a lightning-quick Moroccan snipper in Kilburn and £3 of that is a tip if he doesn't lop off an ear by mistake. But I gather that the fee for a "first consultation" with London's most expensive hairdresser, reputedly Stuart Phillips of Covent Garden, is £265. And that rises to £20,000 if you want his "diamond service" (which, admittedly, does include a diamond necklace).

My point? Any item or service can be sold for any price if someone out there is willing to pay it. Scarcely an original thought, but it's worth repeating in the week when London's theatres are again under attack for their ticket prices.

The trigger this time is *Plaza Suite*, the Neil Simon comedy that transfers to the West End from Broadway next year. You can rent the movie version on Amazon for £3.49, but if you want to see this staging it will cost a bit more. In fact, £391.51 more if you go for the "premium package" seats, which are £395 each. Even moderately good stalls are priced at more than £200.

For that money, it's true, you get two of America's biggest stars: Sarah Jessica Parker and Matthew Broderick. And you see Parker making her West End debut, 47 years after her first appearance on Broadway.

Even so, there's outrage on social media about the *Plaza Suite* prices. "For £395 I could rent a real suite at the Plaza," one wag quips. Witty, if not quite true. Even a small suite at that Manhattan hotel costs north of $1,000 a night.

Nevertheless, many commentators detect a worrying trend — that every West End production featuring big stars will be priced out of reach of people on average salaries. You expect musicals to be expensive. But even Kenneth Branagh's imminent production of *King Lear* (not a musical, as far as I'm aware) has tickets going up to £250.

Is it cause for outrage, though? The key to understanding the commercial theatre world is in the title. It's commercial. It receives no subsidy. Even a non-musical



> Why do we expect theatres to charge less?

production will have start-up and running costs amounting to millions of pounds. To recoup that, ticket prices are set at the maximum level the public will pay. That's called economics. It's how theatre has worked since Shakespeare's day.

There's something else. The top-price ticket — the figure invariably quoted by aggrieved tweeters — is misleading. The average ticket price in West End theatres last year was £54.38, not £395. Most productions offer some tickets under £40. And at venues receiving public subsidy the cheapest tickets are usually well below that. Incredibly, given its "elitist" reputation, the Royal Opera House was found to be offering the cheapest adult ticket in the West End (just £11) when The Stage newspaper did a snap survey this summer.

So when David Tennant complained this year that high prices were "strangling the next generation of theatregoers", I can only think he was overlooking the cheaper tickets on offer, especially for teenagers and young adults. What may be strangling their interest are people perpetuating the myth that you need hundreds of pounds just to enter a theatre.

In any case, when West End theatres are presenting world-famous stars in world-class productions, why shouldn't their premium prices be comparable to London's other premium experiences? If I want to gorge on the "menu exceptionnel" at Le Gavroche it will set me back £200, or up to £425 if I also want the recommended wines to go with it. If I want to watch the world's best tennis players in a Wimbledon final I will be paying a minimum of £250 for a Centre Court seat — or (more likely) 20 times that if I can buy it only as part of a hospitality package.

And if I crave a "VIP package" to see Madonna at The O2 next month I will have to pay anything up to £1,300. Nobody thinks that's immoral. Why do we expect West End theatres, uniquely in the whole world of commerce, to sell their wares for less than they are worth?

This is the brutal truth

A brave move by Nicholas Boys Smith of the environmental organisation Create Streets. In a blistering article on the Unherd website he has linked the closure of hundreds of schools and public buildings with decaying reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (Raac) roofs to the "mania for modernity" imposed by those "shockingly dismissive of public preferences".

In case you were wondering, he means architects and town planners. And, unsurprisingly, architects are indignant about this accusation. They didn't invent substandard concrete, they point out, nor decide the budgets that meant cheap materials had to be used in public buildings. Just as they didn't invent the flammable cladding on Grenfell or the prefabricated panels on Ronan Point, the London tower block blown apart in 1968.

That's true. But brutalist postwar architects fostered an atmosphere of contempt for the public, of "we know best" arrogance, that led to inhumanely designed estates constructed with shoddy materials.

My younger daughter is one of the lucky ones. She attends a state primary school housed in brick buildings as solid today as when they went up 150 years ago. A few miles away, schools built just 40 years ago are unsafe. As Boys Smith points out, "new buildings should get better, not worse, with the centuries; [their] utility, beauty and longevity should improve not degrade".

Clearly, many haven't. But the real problem is that many architects don't even accept that this is their problem.

Pedro's paella

Pedro Almodóvar on his gay cowboy film, severe back pain — and his struggle with loneliness. By Blanca Schofield



'I give long answers because I have a lot of things to say about my work," Pedro Almodóvar says. He is a great talker, so much so that he once gave a journalist a 19-minute response to a question. And why not? There is, after all, much to discuss. The Spanish director's career spans almost 50 years, with 22 post-Franco taboo-busting films bursting with vibrancy, often featuring Antonio Banderas and Penélope Cruz (whom he describes as a "Spanish Meryl Streep"). Almodóvar, 73, has been nominated for five Oscars and won two: best foreign film for *All About My Mother* and best original screenplay for *Talk to Her*. Recently he started working in English as well, releasing a short film, *The Human Voice*, with Tilda Swinton in 2020 and now *Strange Way of Life*, starring Pedro Pascal and Ethan Hawke.

This latest is a western about two cowboy lovers, Silva (Pascal) and Jake (Hawke), who see each other again after 25 years apart. Talking at length is a crucial element in the story — Silva and Jake are more expressive than your usual cowboys, with their vulnerable conversation upon reuniting taking up much of the film's 30 minutes. Almodóvar describes this dialogue as "naked" and "undressed". "That is much more erotic and powerful than showing them f***ing," he says over Zoom from his office in a baking-hot Madrid, where he lives, and today is dressed in a magnificent red shirt with white flowers.

The lack of on-screen f***ing is interesting. Not because of some lurid voyeurism, but because Almodóvar has always said that if he had directed the 2005 gay western *Brokeback Mountain* (an opportunity he was offered but rejected), he would have put more sex scenes in it. He repeats this again in our interview, pointing out that the original story by Annie Proulx is very physical.

Yet Almodóvar wrote the screenplay for *Strange Way of Life* with a different kind of sex in mind: one explicit in the language, the gazes. "It's more subtle but it's absolutely erotic," he says, while adding: "I know they both have a lot of admirers so it's good for audiences to know they're not going to see them f***." Pascal's bottom does appear in one shot, but that's as kinky as it gets.

He met both actors after seeing them on stage — Hawke in *The Cherry Orchard* in Madrid and Pascal in *King Lear* on Broadway. When he wrote this screenplay, they were his first choices for the main roles. "And filming with them has been a marvellous experience. Because also there was great chemistry between them from the start." In Cannes in May, Hawke called his co-star "a very attractive, extremely talented man".

Almodóvar is single, but as a misty-eyed softie I wonder if there had been an encounter with a past partner in his own life that had inspired him to write *Strange Way of Life*. "That would be very romantic. And I don't know if it would be realistic. It would be great if it were to happen, but it hasn't," he says. "It's an original piece of writing."

His company El Deseo ("the desire") produced the film in collaboration with the fashion house Saint Laurent, which made all the costumes. But "it's not a fashion film" and he would be

> I had a back operation. So travelling for me is a kind of torture

annoyed if it was called one. Almodóvar chose all the clothes after watching lots of old westerns — "I copied them all from other films," he says. For example, Silva's vivid green jacket is inspired by the one James Stewart wears in *Bend of the River*, while dresses worn by Mexican prostitutes resemble the ones he saw in *El Dorado*.

I bring up intimacy co-ordinators. Did he use one? "Absolutely not!" he declares, breaking from the Spanish we have been speaking in into English. "I don't think I will need one of them in the future." He respects actors and makes sure everything is agreed before filming begins, he explains. Intimacy co-ordinators are "more American".

western — 'it's absolutely erotic'

COVER AND BELOW: LANDMARK MEDIA, COLLECTION CHRISTOPHEL/ALAMY. BELOW: STEPHANE CARDINALE/CORBIS/GETTY IMAGES





Almodóvar with Ethan Hawke at the Venice Film Festival last month



Ethan Hawke as Jake and Pedro Pascal as Silva in Strange Way of Life. Top: Pedro Almodóvar, centre, with José Condessa and Jason Fernández, who play the young Silva and Jake

Strange Way of Life will be released in cinemas for one night only on September 25, featuring an exclusive Q&A with Pedro Almodóvar

He has heard of Netflix using them in Spain. "And I have to say that the actors who have spoken to me about it say they feel — how do I put this? — belittled. They feel insulted by that type of advice. Because for them it goes without saying that they know the limits they can go to." Maybe in some films they are needed, he says, but he has continued working all these years without one.

Strange Way of Life may be the first western Almodóvar has made but, he points out, he has referenced the genre in his films before. In *Matador* there is a scene where a cinema is showing David O Selznick's 1946 classic *Duel in the Sun*, and in *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown* the protagonist Pepa dubs lines from the 1954 Nicholas Ray western *Johnny Guitar*. In the Nineties he asked for the rights to make a film version of *The Man Who Fell in Love with the Moon*, Tom Spanbauer's book about a bisexual Native American who is the son of a cowboy. But when he tried to find a writer to translate his Spanish script into English, the ones he spoke to "wouldn't dare because of the tough nature of the story".

Would he make it now? "No. I still like the story but I feel a bit old," he says. "It would be a big production. I'll explain it to you more clearly: I had a back operation and the lower part of my back, the lumbar, is immobilised. So this means travelling for me is kind of torture. This type of film would need lots of trips and preproduction, and I think right now I am not physically capable of that."

This is also part of the reason why last year he had to back out of a planned project with Cate Blanchett, *A Manual for Cleaning Women*, based on Lucia Berlin's short story collection and set in New York, which would have been his first feature-length film in English. "The responsibility is all mine," he tells me about what happened. It was a big film requiring a lot of travelling, and he was worried he wouldn't have enough rehearsal time with the actors or enough control over the props. "I am truly obsessive about everything on the set," he says, explaining how he likes to choose every individual piece of furniture, every painting, every glass. "So, given all of this, I decided to be honest and write Cate a letter saying I was so sorry — because I still am sorry — but I don't think I am capable of doing it."

He would still love to work with her but he doesn't think it will happen now. "She didn't seem angry with me, but I would imagine that after this experience, if I call her and say, 'Cate, I would love to make something with you,' she would say, 'No, Pedro, no. One time was enough for me,'" he says with a small, accepting laugh.

Now he is in the process of making a different feature-length film in English set in New York. This one is much smaller, with fewer characters, and all the interiors are going to be shot in Spain (though the writers' and actors' strike has paused work and has him "a bit disorientated"). It's about women, but that's as much information as he will offer. His brother, Agustín, who produces all his films, won't let him divulge any actor names or details — it's utterly "*prohibidísimo*".

Ah well. Instead I ask him about dream collaborations. "I think this applies to the whole world, but I would love to work with Zendaya." He lists other young actors too: Vicky Krieps and Josh O'Connor. "But obviously I would also love to work with Meryl Streep. And Glenn Close. And Jessica Lange and Susan Sarandon."

And what of other themes he wants to cover in his future films? He mentions ageing and the toll it takes. "But I would also bear in mind older women like Jane Fonda, who live through the passing of time with a level of joy, power and good humour that is praiseworthy and admirable."

For all his successes, Almodóvar sometimes struggles with loneliness. In a book of short pieces of writing he published a few months ago in Spain, *The Last Dream*, which is coming out in English next year, he talks about this feeling. "There are times where I find my solitude more difficult to bear," he tells me. Holidays are when he feels loneliest — Christmas and Easter, "when people are away". "Also, I am not religious and I don't celebrate those festivities the way lots of other Spaniards do." But he's used to living on his own. And sometimes, when he feels lonely or bored or has nothing to do, he just starts to write. His is, after all, a job that requires time and solitude.

Our interview takes place the day after Spain won the Women's World Cup. "It's a great achievement!" he says. And, he adds, there is something for us to learn in how the players have no qualms about kissing their girlfriends. "Or showing that they are going out or that one is married to another. It's a huge lesson for men's football, where homosexuality is still a taboo, the same as it was 40 years ago."

The scandal about Luis Rubiales kissing Jenni Hermoso has not yet taken off when we speak. Everything seems, momentarily, blissful. "Today the whole country is united. That's not something you can say every day about our country," he says.

It's a grim truth. As someone who is half-Spanish (my mother is from La Mancha, like Almodóvar), I worry about the country's political strife. A council where the far-right party Vox controls cultural matters caused an uproar this year when it removed *Lightyear*, a film showing two women kissing, from its summer schedule. Does Almodóvar think Vox would allow *Strange Way of Life* to be shown in cinemas? "If it was up to them, no."

He is very vocal politically. "I think as a citizen I have to speak. I have to speak and I have to commit myself very clearly to it without being scared of the prospect of one half of Spain not going to see my films." This happened with his last film, *Parallel Mothers*, which was about the historical memory law that recognises the victims on both sides of the Spanish Civil War. He says that fewer people went to see it than *Pain and Glory*, his previous film. "It [*Parallel Mothers*] made less money here [in Spain] than in France," he says.

We also discuss the importance of healing divisions. "It's the big topic we have to talk about and work on in Spain," he says. "It's not just necessary to attack or expose things you don't agree with, you also have to tell people who don't think like you that you want to coexist with them and for them to coexist with you."

Born in 1949, Almodóvar came of age during Franco's dictatorship, which ended in 1975. So the first time he tasted democracy was when he spent three months in the UK in 1971. "Arriving in London meant experiencing freedom in capital letters. It was the moment when gay power started and glam in music, the birth of David Bowie and Roxy Music, of a new culture where all the young people you saw on the street wore make-up."

He was supposed to be working as an au pair for a member of the Rothschild family in Highgate. "I was very bad, I didn't know how to make a bed," he recalls. But his host, Mira Rothschild, let him stay because she loved practising her Spanish. He also became her trendy friend since he went to lots of films and shows, and all "the underground places". "When her rich friends came over, she would boast that I had been to see Ken Russell's film *The Devils*, for example." She would also go with him to the Hampstead Everyman cinema, where you had to sit on the floor. "It was a very fun friendship." That sounds like movie material, I suggest eagerly. "Yes, that actually could be a good film!"

What about an adaptation of *Don Quixote*, the main cultural export of our region La Mancha? "No," he says, laughing. "I think it's a marvellous novel, but it's very difficult." Though he would have liked to see the version Orson Welles started and never finished, it's not a film project he will undertake. "I would rather not destroy the novel."

In a few days Almodóvar turns 74 and he has no intentions of retiring. "I see myself always making films," he says. "I will keep going. I hope to keep going."

THE CRITICS

The gamers take on Wall Street

A drama about a trading fiasco from the I, Tonya director impresses

Kevin Maher

SONY PICTURES



Pete Davidson and Paul Dano

Dumb Money

15, 104min

★★★★☆

While the world was distracted by the US Capitol attack in January 2021, an even greater, more significant crisis in American political, social and cultural existence was occurring. At least it was if you believe the fundamental thesis of this black comedy, a helter-skelter race through the real-life GameStop short squeeze from the *I, Tonya* director Craig Gillespie.

The what-stop what squeeze? The screenplay, based on Ben Mezrich's book *The Antisocial Network*, describes how a random collection of day traders and online investors outsmarted the highest echelons of Wall Street by backing shares in the video game retail chain GameStop. The Wall Street hedge funds, typically, were attempting to "short" (remember your *Big Short* lessons from Margot Robbie?) the GameStop stock by betting against it, but the digital traders, led by a cat-loving eccentric called Keith Gill (Paul Dano), invested so heavily that the stock price soared and the suits (represented by Seth Rogen and Vincent D'Onofrio) briefly found themselves billions of dollars out of pocket.

Sounds dry and simplistic, but the script from Lauren Schuker Blum and Rebecca Angelo (staff writers on *Orange Is the New Black*) is vivid and visceral, and somehow brings the stultifying grimness of that central pandemic time block (mid-2020 to mid-2021) back to painful life. Here, ghostly train trips, empty city streets, stay-at-home orders and unspoken, underlying grief provide the backdrop for an ensemble romp that cuts between the basement-dwelling Keith, the cash-strapped nurse Jenny (America Ferrera), the store worker Marcus (Anthony Ramos) and the debt-loaded student Harmony (Talia Ryder), all of whom are invested, very literally, in the increasing success of GameStop.

In the process the movie, without once being preachy or sanctimonious, allows its characters to express their rage at how the pandemic seemed to be exploited by canny moneymen who shuttered even more high street stores, and closed more businesses, and inevitably created a wider gap between the haves and have-nots. It's funny too. Which helps.

In cinemas

the classic film

Stop Making Sense (1984)

PG, 88min

★★★★★

Shot over three nights at Pantages Theater in Hollywood, Jonathan Demme's extraordinary film of Talking Heads playing in their pomp somehow combines bonkers stylisation with the transcendent momentum of the great gigs. It opens with David Byrne walking on to an empty stage, turning on a ghetto blaster and singing *Psycho Killer* on acoustic guitar. On each song he is joined by an additional member of the band until the full line-up unites for a rapturously funky *Burning Down the House*. And that's only 20 minutes in — it gets even better.

Everyone plays out of their skin but Byrne is the inspired star, hitting himself in the face, doing laps of the stage and reappearing for *Girlfriend Is Better* in his famous giant suit. The best concert movie in history? I've not seen a better one. **Ed Potton**

At Imax theatres now; in selected other cinemas September 29

Expend4bles

15, 103min

★☆☆☆☆

The knuckle-headed appeal of this dopey action franchise has finally evaporated. Sylvester Stallone is back for a cameo, leaving the XL Bully's share of the action to Jason Statham as the improbably named mercenary Lee Christmas, followed by his ex-lover and bikini-clad assassin Gina (Megan Fox) and the recovering alcoholic Gunner (Dolph Lundgren).



Sylvester Stallone

They need to stop a double agent detonating a nuke in the, ahem, "South Asia Sea". No problem for Christmas, who is so cocksure that when Gina says she's "not in the mood" for sex, he simply fights her until she is. **KM**

In cinemas

Strange Way of Life

15, 32min

★★★★☆

Out of a handful of so-called gay westerns to emerge after *Brokeback Mountain*, this is the most significant. It's a short film from Pedro Almodóvar presented with a recorded Q&A, but contains an epic's worth of detail, drama and "action".

Ethan Hawke's tough Sheriff Jake is reunited after 25 years with his old buddy Silva (Pedro Pascal). They once enjoyed an impulsive fling in Mexico, but now a murder has been committed, Silva's son is involved and Jake has been charged with bringing the boy in.

It's juicy material, impeccably handled by the two leads and surely poised for a feature adaptation or, at least, a Netflix series. **KM**

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film reviews

the big film

A masterclass in British tension

Richard E Grant is superb as a sly and supercilious British author in this country house thriller, says Kevin Maher

LANDMARK MEDIA/ALAMY



Richard E Grant delivers some exemplary screen acting, alongside Julie Delpy and Daryl McCormack

The Lesson
15, 103min
★★★★☆

There's a moment late in this literary thriller where Richard E Grant delivers the most exemplary and unexpected piece of screen acting. His character is an ageing British author called JM Sinclair, described as "the most revered writer in the country". He is sitting in the study of his alarmingly huge country estate (JM is clearly on JK's royalties), recovering from a stinging altercation with his young Irish amanuensis, Liam (Daryl McCormack). Sinclair's talent was questioned, his reputation impugned and a terrible secret almost slipped out. Still shaking from the fallout, our older protagonist's face twists from a demented half-laugh to a grimace of rage, a lip tremble of near tears and then back to a giddy half-laugh. Until now, Sinclair has been a model of sophisticated stillness and sly English rectitude, so the sudden release of crazed emotions is almost indecent to behold — like seeing the creepy flicker of Hyde underneath the smooth exterior of Jekyll.

It's also characteristic of a movie that loves its actors and bounces from scene to scene on the thrilling chemistry they provide. The director Alice Troughton, a TV veteran of *EastEnders*, *Lost in Space* and *The Flash*, deserves commendation for finding in Grant the kind of sinister arc that never drifts into kitsch self-parody, which has been a consistent danger throughout his career — he has often seemed one extravagant eyeroll away from a *Withnail* curtain call. Grant's co-stars are also effectively deployed: Julie Delpy is fabulously tricky as Hélène, Sinclair's seemingly supportive French curator wife, while McCormack is suitably doe-eyed as Liam, a postgrad Sinclair enthusiast with his own secret agenda.

The plot, familiar without being wearisome, exists in the shaded subset between *Call Me by Your Name*, *The Wife*, *A Bigger Splash* and the Elisabeth Moss movie *Shirley*, about the writer Shirley Jackson. It is a "big house" drama about what happens when Liam is hired by Hélène to prepare her moody, neurasthenic son Bertie (Stephen McMillan doing a good Alex Lawther from *The Imitation Game*) for the University of Oxford interview. "You need to cultivate the kind of critical thinking that might not be familiar to you yet," Liam says to Bertie during their first encounter, reminding audiences that access to Oxford has been known to be the preserve of multimillionaires who live in mega-mansions and are wealthy enough to hire dishy live-in tutors who can spend summers priming their brats, as Liam does here, on the interconnectedness of all literature.

Yes, Liam moves on to the premises full-time, which is the first eyebrow-raiser, and a recipe for illicit snooping and bed-swapping at the very least. The second is the scene early on where Hélène produces an elaborate non-disclosure agreement for Liam to sign, suggesting that there are murky shenanigans afoot in Sinclair Abbey, most of which are connected to the relatively recent death of the older and preferred sibling, Felix. Sinclair, meanwhile, is struggling to complete his latest novel and, seeing in super-fan Liam the chance to exploit a willing accomplice, promotes him to the rank of literary lackey.

> **The movie loves its actors and their chemistry**

There is fabulous, sustainable tension in all this, and in the power dynamics between the four main characters. Liam's "lowly" status to the family, for instance, as both Irish and mixed-race, is repeatedly underscored. Whenever he seems to be reaching intellectual parity with the Sinclairs, he is suddenly asked to remove dirty dishes or to clear a table — in short, to know his place. Equally, in the knockout study-set showdown between Liam and Sinclair, the most pointed line comes from the older man, who hisses, "We are not peers! You are a proofreader!"

The point of the movie pivots on the idea that the third section in Sinclair's new novel is the worst. Which is curious in context, because the third and final section of the film is also the shakiest. The tight narrative credibility from the novice screenwriter Alex MacKeith creaks and groans, and the denouement depends upon a specific talent possessed by Liam that is utterly risible. Yet the suspicion here is that this is somewhat deliberate, and that the interpenetration between Troughton's film and the book at its centre is so complete that life and art are rebounding off each other relentlessly, trapped for ever in that bleak country estate. And if not? Well, what about those performances?

In cinemas

Flora and Son
15, 97min
★★★☆☆

From John Carney, the one-man musical genre machine behind *Sing Street*, *Begin Again* and *Once*, comes yet another movie about singing your way out of heartache, poverty and prejudice. Eve Hewson, the daughter of Bono, is furiously charismatic as Flora, a single mother from Dublin's hard-knock inner city who forms an unlikely bond over FaceTime with the smooth-talking Los Angeleno Jeff (Joseph Gordon-Levitt), a guitar tutor.



Eve Hewson and Orén Kinlan

Carney's refreshingly unsentimental script depicts Flora as a foul-mouthed sex-positive grifter who resents the heavy burdens and slim rewards of solo parenting. The duets she sings with Jeff, composed by Carney and the Scottish songwriter Gary Clark, are quietly moving for the promise of hope they offer. It's a shame, then, when all narrative roads are pointing to a humdinger finale, that the film simply slides out of sight and the end credits rise on an open-mike dirge. Until then, however, it has been worth the ride. **KM**

In cinemas now and on AppleTV+ from September 29

Angelheaded Hipster: The Songs of Marc Bolan
12, 99min
★★★☆☆

After *Moonage Daydream*, a David Bowie documentary very much made in the spirit of its subject, this portrait of his friend and rival feels relatively conventional. The focus, as the title suggests, is on Marc Bolan's music, although rather too much time is devoted to the recording of a tribute album in 2020 — Nick Cave's *Cosmic Dancer* is sublime, U2's *Bang a Gong (Get It On)*, less so.

Still, there are engaging contributions from Bowie, who was informed by Bolan on their first meeting that "your shoes are crap", and Elton John, who was told by him, "I sold a million records this morning" to which John replied: "Fabulous, Marc, how great for you." The director, Ethan Silverman, gives you a sense of the singer's bloody-mindedness, with Billy Idol recalling how he turned a hostile festival crowd from booing to a standing ovation. There are also excerpts of Bolan's awful poetry and cracking footage of the man himself, some of it quite *Spinal Tap*-like. "I do believe in unicorns, in tree spirits," he says; and on reincarnation: "Next time I might be a dustman, or a cat." **EP**

In cinemas now and on streaming platforms from November 6

music reviews

Kylie at 55: super-camp and lots of fun

The Aussie star makes lightweight pop music with a timeless feel, says Will Hodgkinson

ERIK MELVIN



Listening to *Padam Padam* — Kylie Minogue's first Top Ten hit in over a decade and a massively catchy banger to file alongside *Can't Get You Out of My Head* and other favourites — a strange thing occurred to me. It sounds like a straightforward example of ultra-synthetic dance-pop, a magic bean of a song with no connection to the past or future, just the delirious present. In fact it is essentially *If I Were a Rich Man* from *Fiddler on the Roof* in digital form.

Padam Padam has a lot in common with klezmer music. It's in a minor key but has a cheerful melody, the rhythm is on the beat and it has a sentimental quality that makes it ideal for stomping about to, whether at the bar mitzvah or the gay nightclub. It shares an eastern European folk-pop sound similar to all the best Eurovision songs and it's perfect for Kylie Minogue. It also opens her latest album, which returns a beloved star to her rightful place as a maker of super-camp pop — as tasteful as her own brand of rosé and just as fun.

Every now and then Minogue has tried to get away from fluffy pop, with mostly unsatisfying results. *Golden*, her 2018 foray into country music, was totally unconvincing. This time she has understood what she does best and stuck to it, and although there is nothing else to match the instant appeal of *Padam Padam*, the lightweight trance of *Hold on to Now* is uplifting and *Things We Do for Love* is unashamedly cheesy. *Tension* takes the most basic stabbing house piano rhythm and sticks Minogue's much processed voice over it, with which she orders the listener to touch her in a place that cannot be mentioned before breaking out into a squealing falsetto. And that's just the first four songs.

There is no attempt at depth here; no earnest reflections on making the world a kinder place or any of the other, disingenuous themes pop stars concern themselves with. Instead comes *10 Out of 10*, an icy blast of hi-NRG disco on which an emotionless male voice announces that — for body, touch and energy — the subject of the song is getting top marks all round. Things almost get serious on *You Still Get Me High*, an Eighties-style heartland ballad about holding someone tight under the electric light, but then the chorus speeds up into a big singalong about nothing much and we're back into pure silliness.

The album ends with *Story*, a sort-of-heartfelt pop song in the Taylor Swift fashion about two people in love — but then Minogue goes for some comically high notes as she sings about the stars coming out, something Swift would never do. At 55 there is no point in Minogue competing with younger stars. Instead she has created an oxymoron: lightweight pop with a timeless quality. It worked for Topol in *Fiddler on the Roof* and now it has worked for Minogue.

pop

Kylie Minogue
Tension
BMG
★★★★☆

T
Jazz album
The saxophonist Joshua Redman tackles post-Trump America. thetimes.co.uk/arts

The National
Laugh Track
4AD
★★★☆☆

A surprise release, this is the National's companion piece to the *First Two Pages of Frankenstein* from this year and continues with its subdued alternative rock sound. "I don't know why I don't try harder," sings Matt Berninger on *Weird Goodbyes*, just one of many songs to capture the depression that almost put an end to the band.

There are some great tracks here amid the grey morass of unhappiness: *Hornets* is a soulful reflection on keeping relationships going and *Crumble*, a duet with Rosanne Cash, has a melody strong enough for future standard status. Elsewhere there is more of the tasteful torpor that we have had enough of from the National.

Devendra Banhart
Flying Wig
Mexican Summer
★★★★☆



Devendra Banhart was the poster boy for the early-2000s "freak folk" movement, a psychedelic revival of Sixties folk's stranger moments. Since then the American-Venezuelan LA-based singer-songwriter has been quietly getting on with it, leading to this hushed, melancholic collection of New Age pop with electronic overtones courtesy of its producer, the Welsh musician Cate Le Bon.

The title track shimmers with desolate charm, while *Fireflies* sounds as if it belongs in the world's loneliest hotel lobby — but in an interesting, *Twin Peaks*-y way. This is unusual, atmospheric music by an artist who, rather than capitalise on his status as a handsome folkie hero, has gone to another place entirely.

Doja Cat
Scarlet
RCA
★★★★☆

Built around a sample of Dionne Warwick's *Walk On By*, Doja Cat's *Paint the Town Red* went to No 1 in August. It presented a woman who grew up in a spiritual commune in California led by the jazz harpist Alice Coltrane, the kind of pop star we haven't seen in a while: one who challenges her audience. Doja even told her fans in July that she did not love them, tantamount to social-media suicide.

The challenge continues on this highly original, borderline menacing blend of high-pitched rap, aggressive sexuality and flirtations with satanism. Here and there the ominous mood dissipates — smooth jazz on *Skull and Bones*, a flash of 10cc's *I'm Not In Love* on *Shutcho* — but for a mainstream figure this is radical material and fascinating with it.

Jonas Kaufmann channels Val Doonican

When Jonas Kaufmann opens his mouth we generally hear the sound of opera. But the albums where Germany's russet-hued star tenor, *right*, ventures into more popular realms are increasing. This time we're getting *The Sound of Movies*, though given the fulsome singing and accompaniments the results are far more like stadium concert fare than anything woven into a feature film soundtrack.



Moviegoing, apparently, is one of Kaufmann's ways of filling spare hours on tour, which could partly explain why his choices are so scattershot. *1492: Conquest of Paradise*, the 1970 weepie *Love Story*, the caper movie *A Man Could Get Killed*: you never know what's coming next. The album notes speedily explain that past operatic tenors like Richard Tauber and Joseph Schmidt also did their movie stints, persuasively, both on and off screen.

But their cinema repertoire veered towards operetta anyway, while Kaufmann's less suitable picks bring forth stucco-dislodging blasts, several ill-judged swoops and leaps, and unconvincing drifts into humming, whistling and "da di dada", almost as if he's trying to channel that old TV charmer Val Doonican, of the laid-back cardigan, smile and guitar.

If the Czech National Symphony Orchestra (conducted by Jochen Rieder) stays fairly muted, quiet and simple moments can still spread delight. *Moon River*, featuring Milos Karadaglic's guitar, is effective; *Bring Him Home*, from *Les Misérables*, also works well. But on the whole I emerged wishing Kaufmann had spent more of his downtime visiting museums and art galleries.

The pianist Stephen Hough, meanwhile, seems to occupy his spare hours with pen and manuscript paper, composing. The latest parade of his characterful output is *Mirabilis*, an uplifting album with radiant singing from Michael Waldron's London Choral Sinfonia and some dashing organ playing by James Orford. The big piece is Hough's *Missa Mirabilis*, a 22-minute mass of considerable strength and, in the Credo especially, an individual point of view, balancing doctrinal certainty with expressions of doubt and despair. The little organ Sonatina is another gem, with a finale that would sound terrific bouncing round any cathedral. Keep on composing, Stephen. And, of course, playing the piano.
Geoff Brown

classical

Jonas Kaufmann
The Sound of Movies
Sony Classical
★★★☆☆

London Choral Sinfonia
Mirabilis: The Music of Stephen Hough
Orchid Classics
★★★★☆

first night

theatre

It's Headed Straight Towards Us

Park Theatre, N4
★★☆☆☆

It has, as you'd expect from a play by two former stars of *The Young Ones*, a fair few funny lines. Yet be warned, or at any rate primed: Adrian Edmondson, who along with Nigel Planer wrote this study of two actors stuck in a trailer on a film shoot in Iceland, has long been a fan of Samuel Beckett. His show *Bottom,* with Rik Mayall, was a kind of rackety rewiring of Beckettian stasis.

It's Headed Straight Towards Us is its more middle-aged cousin. These two wisecracking thesps compete, carp, reminisce and rage, but they don't really get anywhere. You don't really expect them to. Meanwhile, the exasperated runner celebrating her 21st birthday (nicely played by Nenda Neururer) may or may not be the daughter of one of them. I enjoyed some of the lines and much of the acting, yet there is no escaping the sense that time is just being killed here.

Fine cast, though. Samuel West is prissy but never caricatured as Hugh, here to reprise his supporting role as a butler in a successful sci-fi series. Off the booze and settled in a largely happy gay relationship, he also has a heterosexual past that includes a busted marriage. Oh, and a cobbling hobby to help to pass the time.

Rufus Hound is his hell-raising counterpoint as Gary, the homeless former Hollywood bad boy with six — perhaps now seven — illegitimate children, plus an old-school fondness for drink, sex and saying whatever he likes. It's a shame that Hound's red alien outfit makes him unrecognisable in the first half (albeit neat work from the designer Michael Taylor). He gives a typically robust, comically astute performance as the loud-mouthed legend reduced to a one-line cameo.

They can be good company, especially early in the second act after an avalanche has trapped them on an erupting volcano. But that doesn't come to much. The talk of drama school rivalries and disappointed dreams and actorly vanities would all be lovely texture in the service of more of a story. Here, they are the story. Although Rachel Kavanaugh's production capably handles these actors' ups and downs, Edmondson and Planer stay too firmly in their comfort zones.

Dominic Maxwell

To October 20, parktheatre.co.uk



JASON ROBERTS

Ira Mandela Siobhan, centre, is an arresting presence

A drama to trumpet

The story of a murdered elephant and a toxic trade grips Rachel Halliburton

theatre

Mlima's Tale

Kiln Theatre, NW6
★★★★☆

Corrupt customs officials, callous dealers, desperate poachers and pink fur-clad billionaires are swept up in the toxic cycle of ivory trading depicted in Lynn Nottage's powerful *Mlima's Tale*, which won huge acclaim in New York. It's a play that jolts us awake by making us witness the elephant Mlima's death, so that we feel the full obscenity of the murder before encountering the international chain of low lives and social climbers who profit from it.

According to the WWF an average of 40 African elephants are killed each day for their tusks. Despite bans in many countries, demand for ivory means the trade still commands more than £18 billion a year. Mlima, we learn, was a target because he was one of the last "big tuskers" in Kenya. In the poetic opening monologue the beast himself describes how his free-roaming existence in the savannah has gradually been hemmed in by poachers.

Nottage — an acclaimed, versatile playwright whose *The Secret Life of Bees* played at the Almeida in north London in April and whose *Clyde's* opens at the Donmar Warehouse next month — has taken as her starting point the Masai belief that if you don't give an elephant a burial, he'll haunt you for ever. Some might worry that having an elephant's spirit presiding over the whole production could seem overwrought and sentimental, but Nottage's wit and scalpel-sharp script means the impact feels as plausible as it is profound.

As Mlima, Ira Mandela Siobhan is an arresting, authoritative physical presence. Amelia Jane Hankin's subtle, poetic design means that we see him in human form while the shadowy shape of an elephant head looms behind him. Arthur Schnitzler's 1920 drama *La Ronde* has inspired the play's structure but where that play depicted cynicism in sexual relationships by showing the same individuals flitting from seduction to seduction, here the cynicism involves a more gruesome trade in body parts.

And so, in Miranda Cromwell's pacy, beautifully lit production, we watch Mlima haunt cowardly poachers, ruthless Chinese government officials, venal ivory dealers and all-flash-and-cash billionaires. Evil has its farcical side and Nottage fully displays this in darkly satirical dialogue while Mlima observes from the shadows.

Of the cast of four who play the human characters, Natey Jones in particular excels, going from genuine grief as a bereft park warden to sleazy criminality. A thundering triumph.

To October 21, kilntheatre.com

visual art

The Mother & the Weaver

Foundling Museum, WC1
★★★★☆

If mothers left their babies at the Foundling Hospital they were asked to include a token to identify them should the family ever reclaim their child. Among these were pennies, hairpins, a gaming token in the shape of a fish, or beads. Many mothers left swatches of fabrics that were logged in "billet books" along with any other items of clothing that came with the child.

A visit to this Bloomsbury gem never fails to move. Look at the case of tokens and consider, with a lump in the throat, what you would tuck into the swaddling clothes. The museum's 25-year custodianship of the Foundling Hospital comes to an end in 2027 and it has been fundraising to secure its future. *The Mother & the Weaver,* a temporary exhibition of 40 works by female artists, brings the 18th-century collection right up to date.

The billet ribbons haunt you as you make your way around the show. Sonia Gomes's textile piece *Trouxa* (the Portuguese word for a bundle of clothes) is an egg-like form, much stuffed, darned, stitched and mended and strung together with garters, stockings and scrunchies. It's a wonderfully tactile thing. If you found it on your doorstep, you'd pick it up for a cuddle. Sheila Hicks's intricate *Galets* (the French for pebble) are similarly huggable. Get closer, though, and the threads and cords crisscrossing back and forth start to look more like arteries, veins and pulsing tubes.

This is a visceral show. In Louise Bourgeois's series *The Birth* we encounter a series of disquietingly headless mothers as their babies' heads crown. The gouache (opaque watercolour) blurs and bleeds at the edges as if the figures are dissolving with exertion and pain. The show's title draws on Bourgeois's most famous image, of a spider as a mother at once monstrous and loving.

The Foundling is blessed and cursed with a collection that is unmistakably male: Hogarth, Gainsborough, Canaletto and a whole top floor of Handeliana. But it was mothers who came here in desperate need. This intimate exhibition puts women at the heart of the Foundling story.

Laura Freeman

To February 18, foundlingmuseum.org.uk

opera

La forza del destino

Royal Opera House
★★★★☆

Tickets were on resale sites for more than £3,000 apiece when Verdi's sprawling saga *The Force of Destiny* last appeared at Covent Garden in 2019. That was when the force of destiny, or the power of large cheques, had brought together Jonas Kaufmann and Anna Netrebko as the leads. Kaufmann still gets a picture in the programme for this first revival of Christof Loy's show; look in vain for Netrebko, still absent from the London stage after controversy over her alleged associations with the Russian regime and insufficient condemnation of the war in Ukraine.

Although the star wattage is lower here, one of the benefits of this careful revival is a greater appreciation of Loy's staging. Loy's setting blurs periods and "destiny" is more like chaos, as the assorted rabble on stage collide on the battlefield or in the monastery.

Often surreal and disorientating, the show is full of memorable images. The central trio — Leonora, her lover, Alvaro, and her brother, Carlo — are stuck seeking but never finding salvation, whether in obsessive revenge (Carlo) or Leonora's self-denying self-imprisonment in religious orders. That cloistering scene is more disturbing than redemptive, as Sondra Radvanovsky writhes on the floor and her new family of monks look on, both attracted and repulsed.



Brian Jagde and Etienne Dupuis

The three main singers also offer impressively fiery performances. Radvanovsky's juicily sung Leonora begins at full throttle and rarely moves down a gear, but she still finds some soaring pianissimo moments to tingle the spine. Brian Jagde's impressive Alvaro matches her for impassioned high notes, although he could find more nuance at times. And what Etienne Dupuis lacks in vocal weight as Carlo — the bottom of the voice is quite grainy — he makes up in his compelling portrait of a rotten soul drifting to rock bottom.

Against those fine performances, there is good work from Vasilisa Berzhanskaya as the free spirit Preziosilla — dancing all the way to the grave — but other roles are undercast. The clerics are a disappointment: *Fleabag*'s hot priest has competition in Evgeny Stavinsky's Padre Guardiano, but he's vocally underpowered, and Rodion Pogossov's Fra Melitone is neither peevish nor funny.

The kaleidoscopic sweep of Verdi's score, however, emerges in vivid detail under Mark Elder's baton. He brings symphonic weight to the overture, and finds the space and support for much excellent soloistic playing from an orchestra on top form.

Neil Fisher

To October 9, roh.org.uk

first night

Shouty Shaw turns a satire into a panto

Even Patsy Ferran and Bertie Carvel can't make this overheated, overacted show work, says Dominic Maxwell

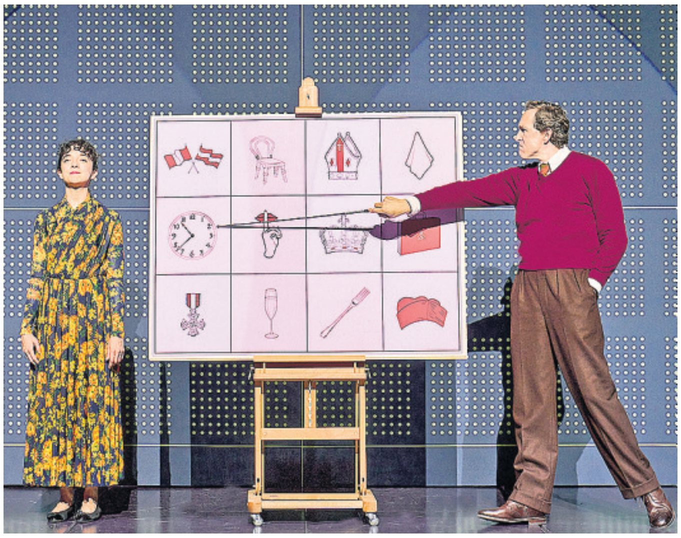
theatre

Pygmalion
Old Vic, SE1
★★☆☆☆

The late-summer heatwaves are barely done but Christmas has arrived already at the Old Vic with this *Pygmalion* played at pantomime pitch. True, the bittersweet final third of Richard Jones's characteristically capering production finds some of the grace and sting excluded from the preceding hour-plus.

Yet by then you've been shouted at for so long by outsized characters trying so hard to be funny that it's almost as if a fresh play has started. It is a loud and insistent evening.

MANUEL HARLAN



Patsy Ferran and Bertie Carvel in a production that mixes the play and the film

And you know the overacting is a choice rather than an accident because the production is led by two of the best actors in Britain, Patsy Ferran and Bertie Carvel. Ferran, the recent winner of the Olivier for best actress as Blanche Dubois in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, looks lost amid the early overplay as a shouty, vigorously larky Eliza Doolittle.

The whimsical whoosh of it all leaves her little space to establish Eliza as a character, or even as a cockney really, while the colourful clinicism of Stewart Laing's pink marble set with perforated panels on the walls adds to the sense of clatter.

Meanwhile Carvel, his frame curled into a question mark, his voice stuck in an expansively insistent tone of emotional negation not a million miles from his wonderful Miss Trunchbull in *Matilda the Musical*, is virtuosic yet cartoonish. Played so broad, there is no tension in the scene in which Eliza first tries to convince Henry's mum and pals that she is as posh as what they is. Energy wins out over accuracy.

The production blends George Bernard Shaw's 1913 play with his 1938 screenplay, bringing in the "rain in Spain falls mainly on the plain" routine that the musical adaptation, *My Fair Lady*, later filched from the film. Some of the cast are drowned out by the outsized aesthetic, while some — Taheen Modak as a beamingly boobyish Freddy Eynsford Hill; John Marquez oozing comic vitality as Alfred Doolittle — play up to it.

You are grateful for the restraint of Michael Gould as Colonel Pickering, and best of all Sylvestra Le Touzel as an enjoyably acidic Mrs Higgins. (Le Touzel, presumably coincidentally, had a success in the Eighties in a *Pygmalion*-themed Heineken advert.)

> **Ferran looks lost in the whimsical whoosh of it all**

Judging by the crowd on final preview, some will go for the overplay more than I did. And I was swayed by some of the stiller moments once Eliza starts ruing her fate. Ferran looks far more comfortable. She and Carvel, their red and brown outfits now mirroring each other, are finally allowed the odd moment of connection.

Full marks for brio and, at just over two hours, brevity. Yet too often the vim and desire to shake things up feels as bullyingly overinsistent as Henry Higgins on a rant about diphthongs.

To October 28, oldvictheatre.com

classical

CBSO/Bleuse
Symphony Hall, Birmingham
★★★★☆

Now that Birmingham city council is hundreds of millions of pounds in the red, and government enforcers are running the sorry show, I wouldn't be surprised if the marvellous organ that Johannes Klais built for Symphony Hall in 2001 was soon flogged for scrap metal and the hall itself turned into an Amazon warehouse, or maybe a very resonant Wetherspoons. So perhaps we should cherish events like this delightful if rather noisy afternoon concert while they are still available.

It celebrated not just the Klais organ, all 6,000 pipes of it, but also its chief champion, Thomas Trotter, himself something of a Birmingham institution (he has been city organist for 40 years). I hope he's not also in danger of being flogged off, because he's in superb form. For Poulenc's melodramatic Organ Concerto he played the mighty instrument from a detached console placed right at the front of the stage. That was transfixing. We could see at close quarters his fingers and feet racing over the four manuals and pedalboard, even as we heard the extraordinary timbres he coaxed from the instrument: sometimes snarling angrily; elsewhere eerily translucent or plaintively beguiling.

For Saint-Saëns's Organ Symphony he retreated to the console embedded in the giant organ case, but there was no retreat in aural terms. Having accompanied the strings gently in the soupy slow movement, Trotter made his entry into the finale properly spine-shaking, and the work's ending was pure showbiz exhilaration.

All this the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra accompanied with terrific energy under the direction of Pierre Bleuse, the chief conductor of Pierre Boulez's old band, the Ensemble Intercontemporain. He coaxed a beautifully fluid, subtle performance of Ravel's *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, then introduced us to a romantic gem: *La Nuit et l'Amour* by the 19th-century French composer Augusta Holmès, which has a melody as sumptuously curved as anything by Massenet or Messager.

Richard Morrison



theatre

Boys from the Blackstuff
Royal Court, Liverpool
★★★☆☆

How do you take one of the great TV series of the past 50 years and make it feel both familiar and new on stage? James Graham's filleting of six hours of television is adroit: he trims, tweaks, restructures, adds flourishes of his own. He marshals the resources of Alan Bleasdale's vivid, angry, sympathetic, blackly comical 1982 original with skill and wit.

Yet in Kate Wasserberg's production for Liverpool's Royal Court and Stockroom Productions it's hard ever to forget entirely that that is what he is doing. It's efficient, it's streaked with outspoken Scouse wit, but it rarely leaps out of the stage at you.

Not the fault of the fine cast, who expertly tread that fine line between doing their own thing and recalling the originals. Nathan McMullen is an affable delight as nice-guy Chrissie. Barry Sloane has Bernard Hill's big-moustached look but his own dark vitality as the bolshie, headbutt-happy Yosser Hughes.

Mark Womack, Aron Julius and Andrew Schofield do a fine job of rounding out the main five, who start the play queueing for the dole, spend much of it doing a dance with the "sniffers" out to expose their benefit fraud, then end it at the second of two funerals. Lauren O'Neil and Dominic Carter are among a versatile supporting cast.

Bleasdale and Graham make sure to see both sides, to show the downside of the heroes and the upside of the villains. That's impressive but the play still feels like an artful précis rather than the real deal.

Take the celebrated row between Chrissie and his wife Angie (O'Neil here, Julie Walters in the original). It's beautifully played, but its impact is muted because it's palpably condensed and bunged into the second act along with other greatest hits from the second half of the series. Some (Yosser's quip in the confessional) earn rounds of applause. Few find the context to resonate like they once did.

The sheer size of Amy Jane Cook's handsome split-level industrial set can swamp the action. Yes, there are moments — the characters singing a shanty, or emerging from both sides of the stage begging for work — where it embraces that, where it all feels freshly minted for the stage. More often it feels like a tragicomic tribute rather than a play that convinces in its own right.

Dominic Maxwell

To October 28, liverpoolsroyalcourt.com

A luscious look at this monstrous master

Carol Midgley
TV review



Picasso: The Beauty and the Beast
BBC2
★★★★☆

Crime
ITVX
★★★☆☆

'Should the art be separate from the artist?" is a frequent debate these days, but **Picasso: The Beauty and the Beast** thankfully didn't beat us over the head with it. It doesn't really address that question until the closing minutes of its finale (episode three) and then does so only fleetingly.

It is more concerned with charting faithfully the life and work of the master and monster who treated women brutally but painted beautifully, letting the viewer draw their own conclusions. The result is a luscious three-hour fresco given added texture by old audio recordings and photographs, and the testimonies of his daughter Paloma and three of his grandchildren, who weren't allowed near him when he died in 1973 because his wife refused to let them in. Episode one covered mainly the pre-famous Picasso, who showed incredible, mature talent as a child. He was raised in a macho culture of bullfighting and brothels, which may possibly explain a few things.

There were warning klaxons to his controlling nature with his first love, Fernande Olivier, when he locked her in their flat when he went out. The most sickening detail was that he and Fernande adopted a 13-year-old girl from an orphanage and, before long, Picasso was painting her naked with her legs splayed. The poor child was sent back, almost certainly as an act of protection by Fernande.

Picasso later fell in love with a Russian ballerina and poor loyal Fernande, who had stuck with him through his poverty years, was cut off without a penny. The final moments saw her, now in her seventies, visiting their old room in a poignant clip from the 1950s. You'll have to wait for the other episodes for *Guernica*, the suicides and Picasso's swinging. It's well worth the investment.

ARNOLD NEWMAN PROPERTIES/GETTY IMAGES/BBC



The series shows both sides of Picasso, leaving viewers to judge

The first series of Irvine Welsh's **Crime** was excellent, thanks mostly to the superb performance of Dougray Scott as the show's protagonist, DI Ray Lennox. So it gives me no pleasure to write that series two begins like a bit of a dog's breakfast. Lennox, fresh-faced after a spell in rehab, is just as charismatic and the splendid Ken Stott no less wearily splenetic as the police chief Bob Toal.

But the plot is initially all over the place, confusedly weaving the trans community with a violent hotel assault. Unusually, some of the dialogue is teeth-itchingly wooden (sample: "You sound like a semi-literate clown from a polytechnic so low-rent Thatcher forgot to rename it a university").

If I didn't do this job I'd have bailed out midway through episode two but I do, so I didn't, and I'm glad. It gets much better, recovering its first-rate black humour. Also, John Simm returns as the evil paedophile killer "Mr Confectioner". There are well-written scenes in which Bob meets one of his former detectives, who is now a trans woman (played by Rebecca Root), and keeps calling her Gerry rather than Lauren and getting her pronouns wrong. "I have no f***ing place in this world any more," the elderly man rails. "Everything I do and say is wrong." It's an honest portrayal of a modern theme.

Radio choice
Joe Clay



Late Junction
Radio 3, 11pm

Verity Sharp, *above*, continues Radio 3's month-long celebration of the cassette tape (which is enjoying an unlikely revival) with a mixtape from Mark Gergis and Yamen Mekdad, the founders of Syrian Cassette Archives. The label is "an initiative to preserve, share and research sounds and stories from Syria's abundant cassette era (1970s-2000s)", a period when much of the country's recorded repertoire was under threat from the effects of war and displacement. The cassette provided a platform for many Syrian musicians who had not previously had the ability to record or distribute their work.

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television & radio

Viewing Guide
James Jackson

Loch Ness: Hunting the Monster
Channel 5, 10pm

Top pick

Whether or not you put it down to the silly season in the media cycle, Nessie was big news again this summer. Interest in the fabled creature was surging after claims of sightings. In fact only two weeks ago a woman went public with photos she took in 2018 of a mass of flesh breaking the surface of the loch. She feared ridicule back then, but not any more because in August a search — billed as the biggest hunt in more than 50 years — took place. More than a hundred volunteers, keeping vigil from the shores of the loch, recorded any unusual things they saw poking their noses up from the depths. I think by now we would have heard if a plesiosaur had been spotted. Well, maybe next year. But all of this gives relevancy to this documentary about Nessie, which looks at detailed forensic evidence and runs us through 90 years of Nessie-mania, including the hoax perpetrated by an adventurer named Marmaduke Wetherell, which embarrassed the Daily Mail, which was paying him to find evidence of footprints (he had used an ashtray in the shape of a hippo's foot to make the prints). It also hears first-hand stories of those who claim to have seen the creature, and looks at how its myth has fuelled feuds and failure (people have sacrificed their lives to its pursuit). If nothing else, this shows that people can't get enough of the most romantic monster myth of all.

The Continental: From the World of John Wick
Prime Video

The action-thriller movies about the former hitman John Wick have grossed more than $1 billion, so here's the TV spin-off: a "three-part event". It's not about Wick this time, but instead tells the background story of how the young Winston Scott came to be the owner of the Continental hotel, a safe haven for assassins. Being set in 1970s New York, it looks superstylish-retro, and Colin Woodell has a bone-dry charm as the whisky-quaffing Scott. What's more, there's Mel Gibson as the big boss.

Early

BBC1
6.00am Breakfast **9.15** Morning Live. Magazine show **10.00** Fraud Squad. The couple who overcharged a council £400,000 in a care home staffing scam (AD) **10.45** Claimed and Shamed. A woman falsely claims thousands of pounds for an injury caused by a shoe **11.15** Homes Under the Hammer. The development of houses in Bridlington, Hyde and Newcastle-under-Lyme (r) (AD) **12.15pm** Bargain Hunt. Danny Sebastian presents the latest contest from Wetherby, West Yorkshire **1.00** BBC News at One; Weather **1.30** BBC Regional News; Weather **1.45** Five Bedrooms. Heather is unhappy when her seemingly perfect boyfriend throws her a graduation party **2.30** Money for Nothing. Sarah Moore is at Wallyford Recycling Centre in East Lothian **3.00** Escape to the Country. Nicki Chapman is in Hampshire to help a couple find a permanent country home (r) (AD) **3.45** Garden Rescue. Flo Headlam and Lee Burkhill design a practical, productive space to suit a family. Last in the series **4.30** The Finish Line. Quiz contest hosted by Roman Kemp and Sarah Greene **5.15** Pointless. Quiz hosted by Alexander Armstrong (r) **6.00** BBC News at Six; Weather **6.30** BBC Regional News; Weather

BBC2
6.30am Money for Nothing (r) **7.15** Garden Rescue (r) **8.00** Sign Zone: Gardeners' World (r) (SL) **9.00** Nicky Campbell **10.00** BBC News **12.15pm** Politics UK. The week's political proceedings around the UK **1.00** Impossible. Quiz hosted by Rick Edwards (r) **1.45** Eggheads. Quiz hosted by Jeremy Vine (r) **2.15** Murder, Mystery and My Family: Case Closed? An update on the investigation into the 1937 murder of a woman in Bedfordshire (r) (AD) **3.00** Kelvin's Big Farming Adventure. Kelvin takes one of his lambs to the slaughter (r) (AD) **3.30** Great Canadian Railway Journeys. Michael Portillo explores the Province of Quebec (r) (AD) **4.00** Serengeti. The lions and wild dogs are attacked — but worse is to come when a storm ignites a devastating fire (r) (AD) **5.00** Flog It! Special episode revisiting many of the locations that the show has been to (r) **6.00** Richard Osman's House of Games. Milton Jones, Ria Lina, Martin Roberts and Briony May Williams take part (r) **6.30** Marcus Wareing's Tales from a Kitchen Garden. The Michelin-starred chef preserves the last of his summer crops so that they can be enjoyed through the winter, and also throws a party. Last in the series

ITV1
6.00am Good Morning Britain **9.00** Lorraine. Entertainment and fashion news. Presented by Lorraine Kelly **10.00** This Morning. Daily magazine, featuring a mix of celebrity chat, showbusiness news and lifestyle features. Including Local Weather **12.30pm** Loose Women. Celebrity interviews and topical debate from a female perspective **1.30** ITV News; Weather **1.55** Regional News; Weather **2.00** James Martin's Spanish Adventure. In Granada, James visits a restaurant with views of the Alhambra, and also visits an organic caviar farm (AD) **3.00** Tipping Point: Best Ever Finals. Compilation of some of the show's most dramatic endgames **3.25** ITV News; Weather **3.40** Regional News; Weather **4.00** Live Rugby World Cup 2023: Argentina v Samoa. (Kick-off **4.45**). David Flatman presents all the action from the Pool D encounter at Stade Geoffroy-Guichard in Saint-Étienne. Both teams missed out on the knockout stages four years ago in Japan and are likely to see this match as vital to their chances of progressing this time around. With analysis from Maggie Alphonsi, Sean Fitzpatrick and George Gregan, and commentary by Martin Gillingham and Nolli Waterman

Channel 4
6.05am Countdown. Chris McCausland is in Dictionary Corner (r) **6.45** Cheers (r) **7.35** Everybody Loves Raymond (r) (AD) **8.25** Frasier (r) (AD) **9.55** Château DIY. Château Mas du Pradie hosts its first wedding (r) (AD) **10.55** George Clarke's Amazing Spaces. A mountain-top retreat in the Italian Alps and a glass-walled lake house in Lugano (r) (AD) **11.55** Channel 4 News Summary **12.00** Steph's Packed Lunch. Weekday magazine show hosted by Steph McGovern **2.10pm** Countdown. Chris McCausland is in Dictionary Corner **3.00** A Place in the Sun. A couple seek a holiday home on Spain's Almería coast (r) **4.00** A Place in the Sun. Leah Charles-King helps a couple find a home in Spain's Valencia province **5.00** A New Life in the Sun. In France, a couple from Manchester finally get to grips with living and working together. Plus, wedding bells chime for a Cheshire couple in Italy (r) **6.00** The Simpsons. Apu showers his wife with gifts on Valentine's Day, making all the other men in town look bad (r) (AD) **6.30** Hollyoaks. After overhearing a conversation, Goldie is convinced Carter is attracted to John Paul. Elsewhere, Hunter opens up to Zoe about his previous relationship (r) (AD)

Channel 5
6.00am Milkshake! **9.15** Jeremy Vine. The broadcaster and guests discuss the issues of the day with co-host Storm Huntley joining him for phone-ins and reading out viewers' correspondence **11.15** Storm Huntley. Debate on the day's talking points continues with the presenter, who takes viewers calls on the biggest stories **12.40pm** Alexis Conran. The actor, writer and broadcaster examines the important stories of the day **1.40** 5 News at Lunchtime **1.45** Home and Away. While Eden and Felicity search for him, Bree catches up with a manic Cash, and Alf is finally compelled to ask Doctor Cameron for help (r) (AD) **2.15 FILM: Deadly Payback (12, TVM, 2020)** A woman is horrified to discover her pool cleaner is dating her daughter, and uses her for revenge. Drama starring Jessica Morris **4.00** Bargain-Loving Brits in the Sun. A Costa Blanca resident hopes to raise some money at the dog shelter where she volunteers. On the Costa Del Sol, a woman spreads the word about living self-sufficiently **5.00** 5 News at 5 **6.00** Susan Calman's Grand Day Out. The presenter heads to the Wye Valley, which attracts tourists from far and wide for its woodlands, quirky traditions and beauty spots (r) **6.55** 5 News Update



New series. Still

Giles Coren and Esther Walker are back for Series 11 of their hilarious 'vintage' podcast, *Giles Coren has no idea.* Listen to the couple discuss and dismiss potential ideas for Giles's weekly column, with characteristic passion (anger) and wit, over coffee at the kitchen table.

7PM – 11PM

BBC1
7.00 The One Show Live magazine show hosted by Alex Jones and Roman Kemp

7.30 Make It at Market Aspiring makers looking to turn their hobbies into businesses, beginning with a furniture maker and a willow crafter (r)

8.00 Dragons' Den Two business partners pitch their product as the solution to the plastic bag problem, a bike shop salesman has a nightmare with a Dragon's name, and the creators of an altruistic app find out if the fearsome five are in a giving mood (r) (AD)

9.00 Would I Lie to You? Pam Ayres, Sarah Kendall, Richard Osman and Kiell Smith-Bynoe join Rob Brydon, Lee Mack and David Mitchell (5/12) (r)

9.30 Mrs Brown's Boys Lotto fever hits Foley's and it does not take long before rumours swirl around Finglas that Agnes is the jackpot winner (3/4) (AD)

10.00 BBC News at Ten

10.30 BBC Regional News and Weather

10.40 Magic Mike (15, 2012) A male stripper who is the star attraction in a nightclub teaches a dancer the tricks of the trade, while also introducing him to his hedonistic world. The veteran performer falls for his protégé's sister, but finds his wild lifestyle comes between them. Steven Soderbergh's comedy drama starring Channing Tatum, Matthew McConaughey, Olivia Munn and Alex Pettyfer. *See Viewing Guide*

BBC2
7.00 Golf: Solheim Cup Highlights Action from the opening day of the biennial women's team competition between Europe and USA from Finca Cortesin in Andalucia, Spain, featuring foursomes and fourballs matches

8.00 Gardeners' World At York Gate in Leeds, Adam Frost, Rachel de Thame and Frances Tophill celebrate a garden for all seasons, and tackle seasonal jobs for September. In London, cameras follow a head gardener who fell in love with horticulture at a young age

9.00 Snow Dogs Wildlife film-maker Gordon Buchanan teams up with seven huskies to take on a treacherous dog-sledding trail in Canada's spectacular Yukon wilderness (r) (AD)

10.00 Red Dwarf Lister is thrilled to discover he was regarded as a god by Cat's people, until he finds out what has been done in his name (4/6) (r)

10.30 Newsnight Analysis of the day's headlines with Victoria Derbyshire

11.05 Amazing Hotels: Life Beyond the Lobby Presenters Monica Galetti and Rob Rinder arrive at Borgo Egnazia in Puglia, a hotel built to look like a 200-year-old village and capturing the essence of the area through its food and design (6/8) (r) (AD)

ITV1
7.00 Emmerdale Mandy worries about Lydia, Chloe has her doubts, and Gail is daunted for the day ahead

7.30 Live UEFA Women's Nations League: England v Scotland (Kick-off **7.45**). Coverage of the opening match for both teams in Group A1 of the inaugural competition, held at Stadium of Light in Sunderland. England are playing their first match since reaching the 2023 Women's World Cup final before losing out to Spain, but their rivals will be keen to upset their homecoming. Seema Jaswal presents, with analysis from Ian Wright, Karen Carney and Jen Beattie, reports by Becky Ives, and commentary from Seb Hutchinson and Eni Aluko. *See Viewing Guide*

10.00 My Mum, Your Dad Davina McCall's dating show draws to a close, and she shocks the parents when revealing the grown-up kids' role in their journey at the retreat (10/10) (AD)

11.05 ITV News

11.25 The NFL Show Craig Doyle is joined by Jason Bell and Osi Umenyiora to present highlights of the opening match of week three between San Francisco 49ers and New York Giants

Channel 4
7.00 Channel 4 News

8.00 PopMaster TV Ken Bruce hosts the fifth heat of the music competition, based on the long-running radio quiz, which sees more players compete for a place in the grand final (5/6) (r)

9.00 Gogglebox The armchair critics share their opinions on what they have been watching during the week with cameras capturing their reactions (AD)

10.00 Married at First Sight UK The return of the experiment to see whether science can help people fall in love, with experts Mel Schilling, Paul C Brunson and Charlene Douglas ready to help 16 hopeful singles find their perfect match. In the opening episode, the new brides and grooms come together at the stag and hen parties to celebrate their last night of freedom — and to see what they all make of each other (r)

11.35 Married at First Sight UK Four more singles enter the experiment, all taking a gamble and hoping to meet "the one" at the end of the aisle (r)

Channel 5
7.00 Alexander Armstrong in Sri Lanka On the last leg of his journey around the island of Sri Lanka, the presenter moves north into Tamil country, but first he has a close encounter with a deadly but endangered cobra (3/3) (r)

7.55 5 News Update

8.00 Puppy School for Guide Dogs A Paralympic skiing hopeful is assessed to see whether she is ready to be paired with her dog on a permanent basis, while a Londoner needs more help from a trainer to get confident letting his dog off the lead (4/4) (AD)

9.00 Amazing Railway Adventures with Nick Knowles New series. The presenter explores Prague in the Czech Republic, Bratislava in Slovakia, and Budapest in Hungary. He views a complex 600-year-old astronomical clock and visits the Hungarian Railway Museum. *See Viewing Guide* (1/6)

10.00 Loch Ness: Hunting the Monster The definitive story of Loch Ness and the monster that purportedly lurks there. The programme makes detailed forensic examination of evidence of its existence, both photographic, film, anecdotal and cultural, as well as stories from those who claim to have seen the monster. *See Viewing Guide*

Late

BBC1
12.30am-6.00 BBC News

BBC2
12.05am The Hidden World of Hospitality with Tom Kerridge A look at how the industry delivers exceptional service on a huge scale (r) (AD) **1.05** Picasso: The Beauty and the Beast. An exploration of the life, death and legacy of the artist Pablo Picasso (AD) **2.05-3.05** Sign Zone: Helping Our Teens (r) (AD, SL)

ITV1
12.20am My Mum, Your Dad Davina McCall shocks the parents (10/10) (r) (AD) **1.10** Extreme E Highlights. Race two of the Island X-Prix II from Sardinia, as the penultimate meeting of the campaign got under way **2.05** All Elite Wrestling: Collision (r) **3.50** Unwind with ITV **5.05** James Martin's Spanish Adventure (r) (AD, SL)

Channel 4
12.35am Married at First Sight UK The first set of newly-weds jet off to start the next stage of the process (r) **1.30** Married at First Sight UK. Two new couples meet for the first time at the altar (r) **2.30** Ramsay's 24 Hours to Hell and Back (r) (AD, SL) **3.15** Come Dine with Me (r) **5.25** Beat the Chef (r) **5.55-6.20** The King of Queens (r)

Channel 5
12.00 Underwater Stonehenge: The Missing Link Investigating the discovery of a submerged, 9,000-year-old stone circle (r) **1.00am** Casino Show **3.00** Friends (r) **3.50** Britain's Greatest Bridges (r) (SL) **4.40** Great Scientists (r) **5.05** House Doctor (r) (SL) **5.30** Entertainment News on 5 **5.35-6.00** Paw Patrol (r)

television & radio

Still Up
AppleTV+

There are enough rom-coms on TV (*Colin from Accounts*, *Starstruck*, *The Lovers*), but how about an "almost rom-com", as this is being billed? It is set in the after-hours world of a pair of insomniac friends, Danny (Craig Roberts) and Lisa (Antonia Thomas), who keep each other company via phone late at night. She has a kid, while he is single and housebound after a break-up. Theirs is a friendship based on sleepless small talk and shared humour, without a whiff of any secret feelings — or is there? Gradually sucking you in, this is one best watched in the midnight hour.

Live Uefa Women's Nations League
ITV1, 7.30pm

After the World Cup, it's time for the Lionesses to start from scratch. What is the Uefa Nations League? A new league that has its finals in February and will determine Europe's 2024 Olympic qualifiers and how teams line up for the Euros in 2025. A kind of interconnected competition system (England are in a qualifying group with Belgium, Netherlands and Scotland). Confused? Never mind — it's England v Scotland, always an encounter full of passion. The match is previewed on ITV4 at 7pm.

Amazing Railway Adventures with Nick Knowles
Channel 5, 9pm

With Chris Tarrant apparently having hung up his TV travel hat, Nick Knowles is cementing himself as Channel 5's railrider-in-chief. His shirts are loud, his hats broad-brimmed and his manner down-to-earth as he hops between Prague, Bratislava and Budapest. No, this is not innovative, but it has its restful insights as Knowles goes inside a complex 600-year-old astronomical clock ("it's like a living computer!"), clambers around the perimeter of an observation tower and visits the Hungarian Railway Museum.

Film Magic Mike
BBC1, 10.40pm

Steven Soderbergh directs and Channing Tatum stars in a drama set among a group of male erotic dancers — and it is surprisingly deep for a film about men waggling their bits on stage. Matthew McConaughey provides a scene-stealing turn. (15, 2012)

Sky Max

6.00am Supergirl (r) **7.00** DC's Legends of Tomorrow (r) (AD) **8.00** The Flash (r) **9.00** Stargate SG-1 (r) **11.00** Supergirl (r) **12.00** The Flash (r) **1.00pm** NCIS: Los Angeles (r) **3.00** Hawaii Five-0 (r) **4.00** S.W.A.T (r) **5.00** DC's Legends of Tomorrow. Adventure. (r) (AD)
6.00 Stargate SG-1. O'Neill is knocked unconscious and replaced by an alien double (r)
7.00 Stargate SG-1. Daniel is presumed dead after he is abducted by an alien (r)
8.00 Strike Back: Retribution. Mac and Wyatt try to break Idrisi out before Lowry gets to him and Jensen delves into Project Tenebrae (r) (AD)
9.00 The Lazarus Project. Sci-fi thriller starring Paapa Essiedu and Anjli Mohindra (r) (AD)
10.00 Warrior. Ah Toy grapples with a hard choice, while Mai Ling makes a deal with Eliza
11.00 FILM: Fist of Fury (18, 1972) Adventure starring Bruce Lee. Dubbed in English
1.00am The Blacklist. Drama series (r)
2.00 Road Wars (r) **3.00** Hawaii Five-0 (r)
4.00 S.W.A.T (r) **5.00** Highway Patrol (r)

Sky Atlantic

6.10am Urban Secrets (r) **7.55** Six Feet Under (r) (AD) **10.05** Ray Donovan (r) (AD) **12.15pm** Game of Thrones (r) (AD) **1.20** Raised by Wolves (r) (AD) **3.30** Six Feet Under (r)
5.40 Ray Donovan. Ray has moral dilemma as he contemplates cheating on his wife Abby (r) (AD)
6.45 Ray Donovan. The hard-edged Los Angeles fixer faces a tough challenge (r) (AD)
7.50 Game of Thrones. Queen Margaery spends time with her husband King Tommen, and Tyrion walks the Long Bridge of Volantis (r) (AD)
9.00 Billions. Prince's latest play promises to enhance his political platform — but it also puts Philip in a difficult position (7/12) (r)
10.10 Drift — Partners in Crime. Ali and Leo sense a chance to catch Maryam's attacker, and a wild chase has deadly consequences (6/10) (r)
11.10 Drift — Partners in Crime. Ali and Leo are forced to revisit an old case (7/10) (r)
12.10am Das Boot. A destroyer sinks two U-boats (r) **1.10** In Treatment (r) **1.40** Game of Thrones (r) (AD) **4.00** Urban Secrets (r)

Sky Documentaries

6.00am Expecting Amy (r) (AD) **7.10** Discovering: Glenn Close (r) **8.05** The Directors (r) **9.00** Telemarketers (r) **10.00** First Ladies (r) (AD) **11.00** Scouting For Girls: Fashion's Darkest Secret (r) (AD) **12.00** The Inventor: Out For Blood In Silicon Valley (r) **2.10pm FILM: In the Same Breath (PG, 2021)** **4.00** The Directors (r) **5.00** Discovering: Glenn Close (r)
6.00 Telemarketers. Documentary about the murky truth behind a New Jersey call centre (r)
7.00 The Last Hospital: 30 Days In Myanmar. A secret hospital deep in Myanmar's jungle (r)
8.00 Scouting For Girls: Fashion's Darkest Secret Conclusion of the documentary series exploring abuse in the fashion industry (3/3) (r) (AD)
9.00 Spielberg. Steven Spielberg's life (r) (AD)
11.50 After the Bite. Sharks in Cape Cod (r)
1.40am My Icon: Rachel Yankey. The sport star's inspirational figures (r) (AD) **2.00** Otto Baxter: Not a F***Ing Horror Story **3.45** The Puppet Asylum **4.30** Premier League Legends (r) (AD) **5.00** Discovering: Glenn Close (r)

Sky Arts

6.00am Darbar Festival 2018 **7.00** Anyone Can Sing (AD) **8.00** The Joy of Painting **9.00** Tales of the Unexpected (AD) **10.00** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **11.00** Discovering: Richard Gere **12.00** The Joy of Painting **1.00pm** Tales of the Unexpected (AD) **2.00** Camille Pissarro: The Father of Impressionism **4.00** Discovering: Dennis Hopper **5.00** Tales of the Unexpected. Double bill of the mystery series (AD)
6.00 Alfred Hitchcock Presents. Double bill
7.00 The Joy of Painting. A pond in winter
7.30 The Joy of Painting. A quaint country barn
8.00 Discovering: Morgan Freeman. A look at the life and career of the Oscar-winning actor
9.00 Suzi Q. Film exploring the story of singer and musician Suzi Quatro, from the artists she influenced to the family tensions that resulted from her huge ambition and success
1.10am Brian Johnson's A Life on the Road. With Mick Fleetwood **2.10** 27: Gone Too Soon
3.50 Live from the Artists Den **5.00** Inside Art: Masterpieces from Buckingham Palace

Sky Main Event

6.00am Sky Sports News **6.30** Live Solheim Cup Golf. Coverage of the foursomes matches on day one of the women's team competition between Europe and USA from Finca Cortesin in Andalucia, Spain **12.30pm** Live Solheim Cup Golf. The fourballs matches on day one
7.00 Sky Sports News. The latest headlines
7.30 Live EFL: Birmingham City v Queens Park Rangers (Kick-off **8.00**). Coverage of the Championship encounter at St Andrew's. Birmingham will be hopeful of victory after making a solid start to the campaign, but Rangers were impressive in defeating Middlesbrough in their last away game
10.30 Back Pages Tonight
11.00 Sky Sports News
12.00 Sky Sports News **3.00am** My Icon: Ebony Rainford-Brent (AD) **3.15** Live Formula 1. Coverage of the Japanese Grand Prix third practice session held at Suzuka International Racing Course **4.40** George Russell's Lie Detector Test **5.00** Sky Sports News

T AUDIO

no idea.

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TalkTV

6.00am James Max. The day's top stories **6.30** Peter Cardwell **9.30** Mike and Kev. Discussion on the latest news **10.00** Kevin O'Sullivan. The host tackles the big stories of the day **1.00pm** Ian Collins. Monologues and debates **3.00** Alex Phillips **5.00** Vanessa Feltz. Viewers' thoughts on what has got the nation talking
7.00 Plank of the Week. With Mike Graham
8.00 The World According to Mike Graham. An examination of the week's biggest stories
8.30 What Just Happened? with Kevin O'Sullivan. A review of the week's news
9.00 Piers Morgan Uncensored Best Of. The host presents his unmissable verdict on the week's global events with an hour of debate
10.00 Jeremy Kyle: Investigates. The presenter takes a look at the major issues of the day
11.00 The World According to Mike Graham
11.30 What Just Happened? with Kevin O'Sullivan. A review of the week's news
12.00 Petrie Hosken **1.00am** Plank of the Week
2.00 Alex Phillips **3.00** The World According to Mike Graham **3.30** What Just Happened? with Kevin O'Sullivan **4.00** Piers Morgan Uncensored Best Of **5.00** Cristo. Headlines

BBC4

7.00pm Top of the Pops. Kylie Minogue presents an edition from 1995, with music by M People, Celine Dion and Annie Lennox
7.30 Top of the Pops. Music from February 1995 by Scarlet, Vanessa Mae, MN8, Elton John, Elastica, Annie Lennox and Celine Dion
8.00 Top of the Pops. Performances by Pet Shop Boys, Womack & Womack and Bill Withers. First broadcast on September 22, 1988
8.30 Top of the Pops. An edition from September 24, 1981, featuring Slade, Depeche Mode, Madness, Imagination and Japan
9.00 Country at the BBC. Performances by country artists including Tammy Wynette, Emmylou Harris, Johnny Cash, Dolly Parton, Charley Pride, Garth Brooks and Willie Nelson
10.30 Hank Williams: Honky Tonk Blues — Arena. Profile of American singer-songwriter, who was a leading light in country music
11.50 FILM: I Saw the Light (15, 2015) Biopic of influential country singer Hank Williams, exploring his tempestuous marriage and addiction to alcohol and painkillers. Tom Hiddleston and Elizabeth Olsen star
1.45am-3.55 Top of the Pops. Music show

Talking Pictures

6.00am Ensign O'Toole (b/w) **6.30 FILM: Not So Dusty (U, 1956)** (b/w) **8.10 FILM: Big Ben Calling (U, 1935)** (b/w) **9.00** Glimpses: Our London **9.15 FILM: Life in Emergency Ward 10 (U, 1959)** (b/w) **11.00 FILM: Tokyo Joe (PG, 1949)** (b/w) **12.45pm FILM: Crime of Passion (PG, 1957)** (b/w) **2.30** Crown Court **3.00 FILM: Kind Hearts and Coronets (U, 1949)** (b/w) **5.10 FILM: Blow Your Own Trumpet (U, 1958)** Children's drama (b/w)
6.00 Time to Remember. Events of 1933
6.30 FILM: The Street with No Name (PG, 1948) Thriller starring Richard Widmark (b/w)
8.15 Look at Life. A festival held in France
8.30 Dial 999. Crime drama from 1958 (b/w)
9.00 Cellar Club with Caroline Munro
9.05 FILM: Lifeforce (18, 1985) Sci-fi horror
11.20 Cellar Club with Caroline Munro
11.25 FILM: The Man Who Turned To Stone (18, 1957) Sci-fi horror (b/w)
12.55am Cellar Club with Caroline Munro **1.00 FILM: Rage (18, 1966) 3.05 FILM: Undercover Agent (U, 1953)** (b/w) **4.25 FILM: The Ghost Camera (U, 1933)** (b/w)
5.45 Plagues and Puppy Love (b/w)

Film4

11.00am Tobruk (PG, 1967) Second World War adventure starring George Peppard and Rock Hudson (AD) **1.15pm Man of the West (12, 1958)** Western starring Gary Cooper **3.20 The Guns of Navarone (PG, 1961)** Allied soldiers are sent to sabotage German artillery emplacements. Second World War adventure starring Gregory Peck and David Niven
6.35 Mortal Engines (12, 2018) In a post-apocalyptic world where cities consume each other to survive, two people meet in London and try to stop a conspiracy. Fantasy adventure starring Hera Hilmar (AD)
9.00 Snake Eyes (12, 2021) A tenacious loner is welcomed into an ancient Japanese clan with explosive results. Action adventure inspired by the GI Joe toy line starring Henry Golding, Andrew Koji and Ursula Corbero (AD)
11.20 Patriot Games (15, 1992) A former CIA agent prevents an assassination attempt by an IRA splinter group, but one of the terrorists swears revenge on him. Thriller starring Harrison Ford, Sean Bean and Samuel L Jackson
1.35am-3.45 Red Heat (18, 1988) Action thriller starring Arnold Schwarzenegger (AD)

More4

8.55am Kirstie's Vintage Gems **9.15** A Place in the Sun **10.05** A New Life in the Sun **11.05** Find It, Fix It, Flog It **1.10pm** Heir Hunters **2.10** Four in a Bed **4.50** Kirstie and Phil's Love It or List It (AD) **5.50** The Secret Life of the Zoo (AD)
6.55 The Dog House. A nine-year-old is given the job of choosing a new furry friend out of a litter of three tiny cockapoos (AD)
7.55 Grand Designs. A couple build a shed-like family home at an old milk yard in London, but their choice of unconventional, industrial-style materials proves challenging (5/10) (AD)
9.00 24 Hours in A&E. An elderly couple are brought in after a road accident, while a 23-year-old man reflects on his schizophrenia diagnosis as he is treated for a bad cut (AD)
10.05 24 Hours in A&E. A cyclist is sent for a CT scan after falling from her bike, and a 76-year-old has suffered a suspected stroke (4/8) (AD)
11.10 8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown. With Rob Beckett, Cariad Lloyd and Jamie Laing
12.15am Rig 45: Murder at Sea. The crew are found locked in a cabin. In English and Swedish. Last in the series **1.15** 24 Hours in A&E (AD) **3.20-3.50** A Place in the Sun

ITV2

6.00am CITV **9.00** One Tree Hill **10.00** Dawson's Creek **11.00** Love Bites (AD, SL) **12.00** Dinner Date (AD) **1.00pm** Family Fortunes **2.00** Chuck **3.05** One Tree Hill **4.00** Dawson's Creek **5.00** Dinner Date (AD)
6.00 Celebrity Catchphrase. With Charlie Brooks, Jimmi Harkishin and Siobhan McSweeney (AD)
7.00 Family Fortunes. Gino D'Acampo hosts
8.00 Superstore. Amy struggles to contact the store's new parent company (AD)
8.30 Superstore. The employees wrestle with the loss of beloved co-worker Myrtle (AD)
9.00 FILM: Pitch Perfect (12, 2012) A new student joins an a cappella singing group made up of social misfits to compete in campus music competitions. Comedy starring Anna Kendrick, Rebel Wilson and Brittany Snow (AD)
11.15 Family Guy. Peter and the gang are forced to join the United States Coast Guard (AD)
11.45 Family Guy. Brian posts an offensive tweet that quickly goes viral online (AD)
12.10am American Dad! (AD) **1.10** Superstore (AD) **2.10** Iain Stirling's CelebAbility **2.45** Unwind with ITV **3.00** Teleshopping **5.00** CITV

ITV3

6.00am Classic Emmerdale **7.05** Classic Coronation Street (AD) **8.05** On the Buses **9.15** Where the Heart Is (AD) **11.35** Heartbeat (AD) **1.40pm** Classic Emmerdale **2.45** Classic Coronation Street (AD) **3.55** Endeavour (AD)
5.55 Heartbeat. Bernie becomes the target of a predatory widow and Carol feels guilty when a newborn baby dies in her care (AD)
6.55 Heartbeat. Phil and Geoff keep watch on an illegal gambling club in the hope of finding evidence to close the establishment (AD)
8.00 Doc Martin. Louisa and Martin have their first fertility consultation, and Joe investigates a case of vandalism at a surf school (6/8) (AD)
9.00 Doc Martin. The medic has to rush Buddy the dog to the vets, while Mrs Tishell's cousin Sarah joins her for work experience (7/8) (AD)
10.00 Professor T. Jasper thinks a vulnerable girl may be a murder witness (5/6) (AD)
11.00 Professor T. An attempt is made on a billionaire's life, and the professor is haunted by a childhood memory on his birthday (6/6) (AD)
12.10am Where the Heart Is (AD, SL) **2.15** Unwind with ITV **2.30** Teleshopping

ITV4

6.00am Minder (AD, SL) **7.05** The Professionals (AD, SL) **8.05** The Saint **9.15** The Return of Sherlock Holmes (AD) **10.20** Magnum, PI **11.25** The Motorbike Show **12.30pm** The Saint **1.35** The Return of Sherlock Holmes (AD) **2.45** Magnum, PI **3.45** The Professionals (AD) **4.50** Minder (AD) **5.55** The Motorbike Show
7.00 Live Uefa Women's Nations League. Seema Jaswal is joined by Ian Wright, Karen Carney and Jen Beattie to present build-up to England v Scotland in the inaugural competition. With reports by Becky Ives. *See Viewing Guide*
7.30 River Monsters. Jeremy Wade tries to find a predatory creature in the Zambezi River
8.00 The Chase Celebrity Special. With AJ Pritchard, Hollie Arnold, Giovanna Fletcher and Russell Watson
9.00 An Audience with Billy Connolly. The comedian entertains a celebrity crowd
10.10 All Elite Wrestling: Dynamite. Hard-hitting action
12.15am River Monsters **12.45** Extreme Salvage Squad **1.40** Minder (AD, SL) **2.35** Unwind with ITV **3.00** Teleshopping

Drama

6.00am Teleshopping **7.10** All Creatures Great and Small **8.00** Doctors **9.20** Classic Holby City **10.40** Casualty **11.50** The Bill **12.50pm** Classic EastEnders **2.10** Pie in the Sky **3.10** Bergerac **4.20** All Creatures Great and Small **5.30** The Upper Hand. Laura's name is mentioned in a billionaire's will, and stands to receive £50,000
6.05 'Allo 'Allo! General von Klinkerhoffen visits the vineyard where the Resistance are working
6.40 Last of the Summer Wine. Nora Batty invites Compo up to her bedroom
7.20 Last of the Summer Wine. Clegg and Compo are reunited with an old friend
8.00 Father Brown. The priest investigates when the father of a writer is found dead (AD)
9.00 Father Brown. The priest and his friends are stranded with a group of hedonists (AD)
10.00 New Tricks. The team probe a murder dating back more than 160 years (1/10) (AD)
11.20 Silent Witness. Nikki is humiliated in court when a barrister accuses her of making a serious error in a case of a policeman's death
1.40am Banished. Period drama (AD) **2.55** Classic Holby City (SL) **4.00** Teleshopping

Yesterday

6.10am Motown at the BBC **7.15** Impossible Engineering (AD) **8.00** Abandoned Engineering (AD) **10.00** Secret Nazi Bases **11.00** World War Weird **12.00** Great Continental Railway Journeys **1.00pm** Antiques Roadshow **2.00** Bangers & Cash **4.00** World War Weird **5.00** Secret Nazi Bases. The tunnels, lakes, and secret caches used by the Nazis to hide spoils of war
6.00 Great British Railway Journeys. Michael Portillo travels through the Lake District
6.30 Great British Railway Journeys. Featuring a journey from Preston through to Swinton
7.00 Antiques Roadshow. Fiona Bruce presents the show from Helmingham Hall in Suffolk
8.00 Secrets of the London Underground. North End under Hampstead Heath (2/6) (AD)
9.00 Bangers & Cash. Paul collects a 1924 Rover 9 that a family have owned since the 1950s (AD)
10.00 Bangers & Cash. Mathewsons agree to sell a large collection of tractors (5/10)
11.00 Abandoned Engineering (9/12) (AD)
12.00 Great British Railway Journeys. Double bill of the series **1.00am** Railway Murders
2.00 Motown at the BBC **3.00** Teleshopping

Variations

BBC1 N Ireland
As BBC1 except: 7.30pm-8.00 The Long and the Short of It. Tim McGarry and David Hume look at the Larne Gun-Running incident of 1914

BBC1 Scotland
As BBC1 except: 11.15am-12.15 Homes Under the Hammer. The team considers auction buys in Plymouth and West Yorkshire (r)
7.30pm-8.00 Landward. Dougie Vipond lends a hand with the harvest in Angus (r)

BBC1 Wales
As BBC1 except: 6.50pm Live Match of the Day Wales: Iceland v Wales (Kick-off **7.00**). **9.15-9.30** Weatherman Walking **10.40** Kiri's TV Flashback **11.10** FILM: Magic Mike (2012) **12.55am-6.00** BBC News

BBC2 N Ireland
As BBC2 except: 12.05am-1.05 Sign Zone: DIY SOS Strictly Special. Stars of *Strictly Come Dancing* join Nick Knowles and the team in Wallsend, Newcastle as they set out to transform a performing arts school (r) (AD)

BBC2 Wales
As BBC2 except: 6.30pm Live Match of the Day Wales. Build-up **6.55** Nigel Slater's Dish of the Day **7.00** The One Show **7.30** Make It at Market. Aspiring makers set to turn their hobbies into businesses (r) **8.00** Dragons' Den. Pitches include a solution to the plastic bag problem (r) **9.00-10.00** Gardeners' World **11.05-12.05am** Golf: Solheim Cup Highlights

STV
As ITV1 except: 3.50am-5.05 Night Vision. News, sport and weather from across Scotland

BBC Scotland
7.00pm The Seven **8.00** Inside Central Station (r) (AD) **9.00** This Farming Life. A deep freeze descends on an Ayrshire farm, creating havoc with the farm machinery **10.00** Still Game. Jack and Victor ruin a wedding (r) (AD) **10.30** Limmy's Show (r) **11.00** Icons of Football (r) **11.30-12.00** Best of Only an Excuse? (r)

BBC Alba
6.00am Alba Today **5.00pm** Treubh an Tuathanais (Big Barn Farm) (r) **5.15** Na Clangers (r) **5.25** Sionnach agus Maigheach (Fox & Hare) (r) **5.35** AH-AH/No-No (r) **5.45** Meaban is Moo (r) **5.50** Stòiridh (r) **6.00** Aithne air Ainmhidhean (All About Animals) (r) **6.20** @12 (r) **6.25** Stri (r) **6.30** Geamaichean Gorach (r) **6.35** Ronia, Nighean a' Mheirlich/Ronja, the Robber's Daughter (r) **7.00** An Là (News) **7.25** Dàn (r) **7.30** Live Rugby Union **9.25** Fraochy Bay (r) **9.30** An Clò Mòr (r) **10.00** FILM: The Road Dance (2021) Period drama starring Hermione Corfield **11.50** Dhan Uisge (r) **12.00-6.00am** Alba Today

S4C
6.00am Cyw: Blociau Rhif (r) **6.05** Jen a Jim Pob Dim (r) **6.20** Octonots (r) **6.35** Shwshaswyn (r) **6.45** Y Diwrnod Mawr (r) **7.00** Timpo (r) **7.10** Tomos a'i Ffrindiau **7.20** Oli Wyn (r) **7.30** Crawc a'i Ffrindiau **7.45** Cacamwnci (r) **8.00** Bing (r) **8.10** Digbi Draig (r) **8.20** Dathlu 'Da Dona (r) **8.35** Twt (r) **8.45** Asra (r) **9.00** Anifeiliaid Bach y Byd (r) **9.10** Cymylaubychain (r) **9.20** Ein Byd Bach Ni (r) **9.30** Patrôl Pawennau (r) **9.45** Deian a Loli (r) **10.00** Blociau Rhif (r) **10.05** Jen a Jim Pob Dim (r) **10.20** Octonots (r) **10.35** Shwshaswyn (r) **10.45** Y Diwrnod Mawr (r) **11.00** Timpo (r) **11.10** Tomos a'i Ffrindiau (r) **11.20** Oli Wyn (r) **11.30** Crawc a'i Ffrindiau (r) **11.45** Cacamwnci (r) **12.00** News; Weather **12.05pm** Richard Holt: Yr Academi Felys (r) **12.30** Heno (r) **1.00** Dan Do (r) **1.30** Cymry ar Gynfas (r) **2.00** News; Weather **2.05** Prynhawn Da **3.00** News; Weather **3.05** Noson Lawen 2023 (r) **4.00** Awr Fawr: Timpo (r) **4.10** Tomos a'i Ffrindiau (r) **4.20** Oli Wyn (r) **4.30** Patrôl Pawennau (r) **4.45** Deian a Loli (r) **5.00** Stwnsh: Y Brodyr Adrenalini (r) **5.10** Rhyfeddodau Chwilengoch a Cath Ddu (r) **5.30** Potsh (r) **5.50** News Ni **6.00** Bwyd Epic Chris (r) **6.30** Garddio a Mwy (r) **6.57** News **7.00** Heno **7.30** News; Weather **8.00** Cwpan Rygbi'r Byd 2023. A look ahead to Wales v Australia **8.55** News; Weather **9.00** Cyfres Triathlon Cymru 2023 **9.35** Y Gêm **10.05** Pêl-Droed Rhyngwladol **11.05-11.40** Mas ar y Maes (r)

MindGames

Backgammon Chris Bray

Out of time

Containment in backgammon is defined as the process employed once you have hit an opposing checker in the bear-off. Your prime objective will be to close out the hit checker. The side doing the containment will normally own the cube and may be able to use it to win the game with a well-timed redouble.

Before the advent of computers, containment was largely a dark art, and I have had to unlearn much of what I was taught by "experts" back in the 1980s. Thankfully, XG has taught us a set of techniques that most good players are now aware of and can employ to good effect.

There are many factors that affect the decision-making process: number of checkers already borne off; the strength of the two home boards; the placement of the spare checkers; and the likelihood of a gammon.

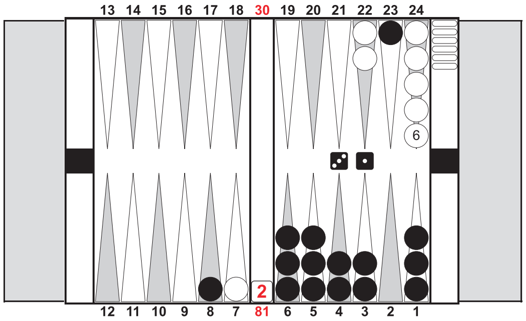
One of my students is Alexandra Llewellyn, the designer and maker of high-end backgammon boards (alexandrallewellyn.com). We reached this week's position in a training game, with Alexandra (Black) having a 31 to play. The ace is played 8/7* but what about the three? The candidates are (a) 23/20; (b) 7/4; (c) 5/2. Which would you choose?

The key points in the position are these: Black is effectively playing with 14 checkers because she has three checkers on her 1-pt; White has already borne off six checkers; Black is running out of time to make her 2-pt.

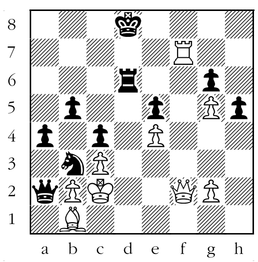
To win the game Black must first make her 2-pt. She cannot redouble until she has borne off at least one checker. She is very unlikely to make her 2-pt naturally and, on every turn, White may roll 62 or 52 to escape.

The correct technique is to slot the 2-pt by playing 5/2. Now if White stays on the bar, Black will have 24 numbers to complete the close-out on her next turn. Slotting is the quickest route to victory. Even if White does enter with a two, Black's checkers are well-placed to try the containment again.

Note also that if White enters with a 21, he will have to expose two blots in his home board and Black will have a very powerful redouble.



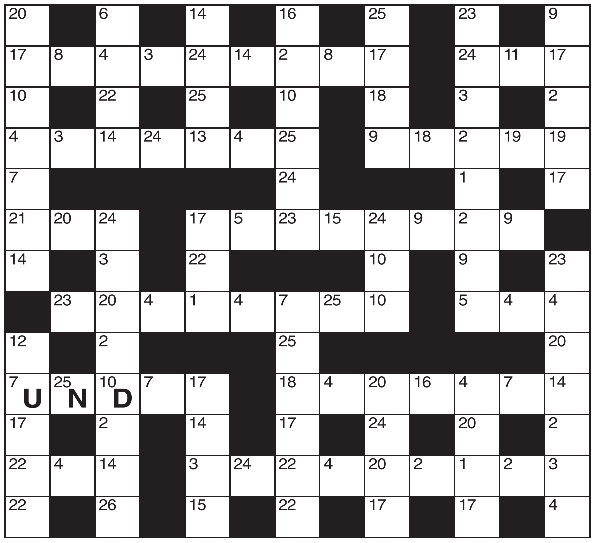
Winning Move



Black to play.
This position is a variation from Fiedorek-Kozak, Suwalki 2023.

This is a double-edged position. The white king is clearly in some trouble with the three enemy pieces closing in for the kill. However, the black queen is a little offside and the white queen and rook are poised to invade the black camp. 1 ... Rd2+ is bad: 2 Qxd2+ Nxd2 3 Bxa2 and 1 ... Na1+ 2 Kc1 Nb3+ 3 Kc2 is only a draw. How can Black do better?

Codeword No 5013



A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

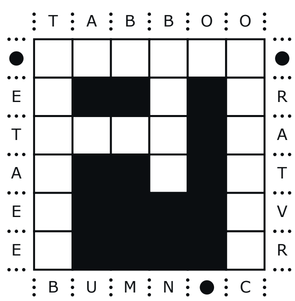
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
						U			D			

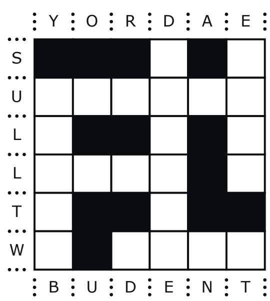
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
											N	

Every letter in this crossword-style grid is represented by a number from 1 to 26. Each letter of the alphabet appears in the grid at least once. Use the letters already provided to work out the identity of further letters. Enter letters in the main grid and the smaller reference grid until all 26 letters of the alphabet have been accounted for. Proper nouns are excluded. *Yesterday's solution, right*

Cluelines **Stuck on Codeword?** To receive 4 random clues call 0901 293 6262 or text TIMECODE to 64343. Calls cost £1 plus your telephone company's network access charge. Texts cost £1 plus your standard network charge. For the full solution call 0905 757 0142. Calls cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri, 9am-5.30pm).

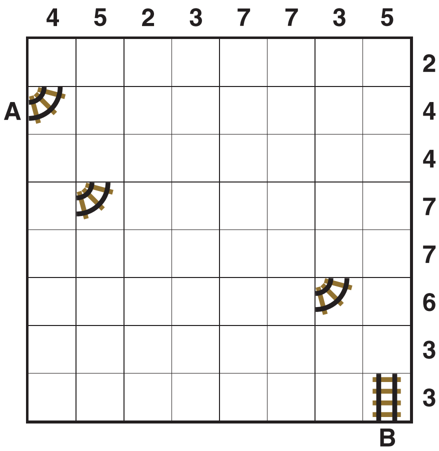
Lexica No 7059 No 7060





Slide the letters either horizontally or vertically back into the grid to produce a completed crossword. Letters are allowed to slide over other letters

Train Tracks No 2046



Lay tracks to enable the train to travel from village A to village B. The numbers indicate how many sections of track go in each row and column. There are only straight sections and curved sections. The track cannot cross itself.

Quintagram®

Solve all five **cryptic** clues using each letter underneath once only

1 Stop learner driver entering Derby? (4)

_ _ _ _

2 Afternoon service? (3,3)

_ _ _ _ _ _

3 Hence they're wrong about British (7)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _

4 Pagan to cook chicken? (7)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _

5 Abe's goat on the loose causes damage (8)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

A	A	A	A	A	B	B	E
E	E	E	E	E	E	G	H
H	H	H	L	N	O	R	S
S	T	T	T	T	T	T	Y

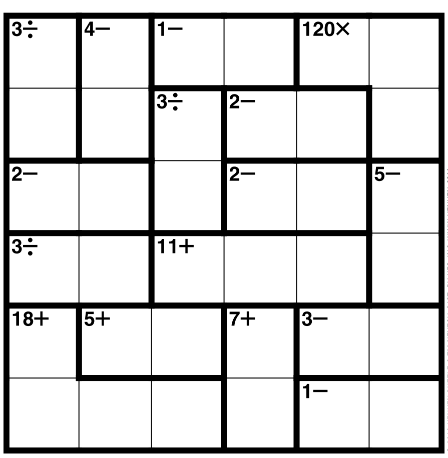
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Email: puzzles@thetimes.co.uk

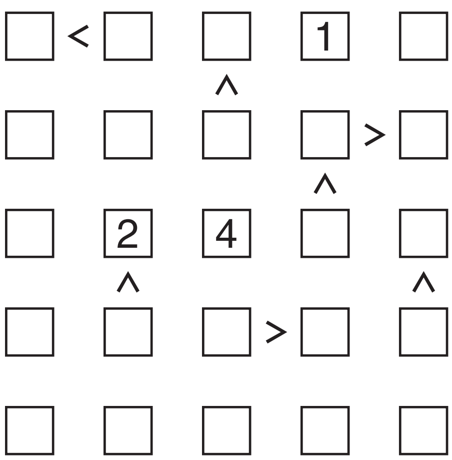
KenKen Difficult No 6005



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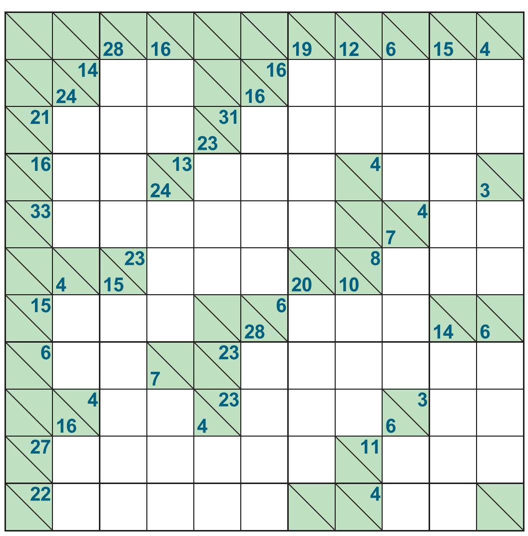
All the digits 1 to 6 must appear in every row and column. In each thick-line "block", the target number in the top left-hand corner is calculated from the digits in all the cells in the block, using the operation indicated by the symbol.

Futoshiki No 4570



Fill the blank squares so that every row and column contains each of the numbers 1 to 5 once only. The symbols between the squares indicate whether a number is larger (>) or smaller (<) than the number next to it.

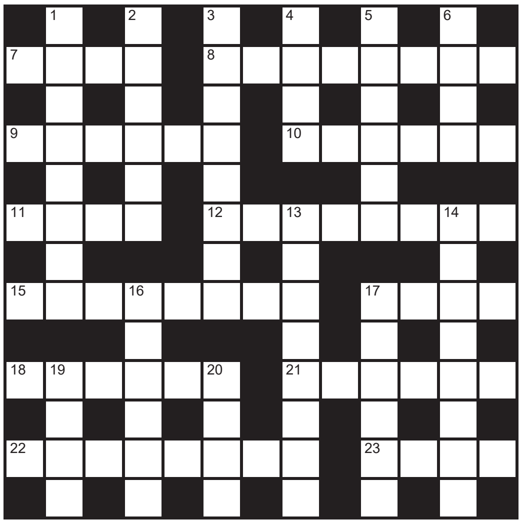
Kakuro No 3529



Fill the grid using the numbers 1 to 9 only. The numbers in each horizontal or vertical run of white squares add up to the total in the triangle to its left or above it. The same number may occur more than once in a row or column, but not within the same run of white squares.

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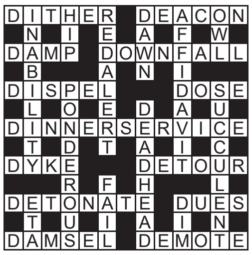
times2 Crossword No 9329



Across
7 Mend with stitching (4)
8 Star symbol (8)
9 Jotting down; observing (6)
10 Opposed (to) (6)
11 Sudden impulse (4)
12 Radio aerials (*S, not E*) (8)
15 Conventional, standard (8)
17 Piece, section (4)
18 (Of an accent) spoken with an emphasised "r" sound (6)
21 Join, connect (6)
22 Head-to-head (3-2-3)
23 Old-fashioned counterpart of the pronoun "thou" (4)

Down
1 Navvy (8)
2 Ablaze (2,4)
3 Foremost group (8)
4 Sicilian volcano (4)
5 Rowan Atkinson comedy character (2,4)
6 In the existing state (2,2)
13 Contributor to state finances (8)
14 Aeroplane propeller (8)
16 Car modified for speed (6)
17 Edible tuber (6)
19 Suspended, dangled (4)
20 Become less hot (4)

Solution to Crossword 9328



Need help with today's puzzle? Call 0905 757 0143 to check the answers. Calls cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri 9am-5.30pm).

Bridge Andrew Robson

The Rules of One to Twenty
Rule of 15

It's a familar decision. The bidding goes Pass-Pass-Pass to you and you don't know whether or not to throw your cards in and have a redeal. If you have about ten or 11 points, the deal will surely be a part-score.

Question: Which suit will win the part-score battle?

Answer: Spades. Even if spades don't become trumps, the team outbidding spades will have to go to the next level — probably going down in their contract by doing so.

The number of cards you hold in spades is therefore crucial in determining whether or not to open in fourth chair. Enter the Rule of 15: After three passes, open the bidding if your number of spades added to your total high-card points get to 15 (or more).

Note, I'm not telling you to pass a beautiful 14-count with a void spade. I'm talking about those ten, 11 (or perhaps 12 counts): marginal openers.

Would you open these hands after three passes? If so, how?

♠ AQJ72	♠ Q2	♠ 4
♥ 97	♥ Q2	♥ K4
♦ K72	♦ KJ52	♦ KQJ975
♣ 1042	♣ A9632	♣ K1092

With the first, open 1♠, a classic Rule-of-15-opener. You'll pass partner's new-suit response.

I wouldn't open 1♣ with the second, a hand that fails the Rule of 15. The choice is between throwing in the deal or perhaps opening 1NT, partly to avoid a rebid problem and partly to pre-empt out the majors.

Perhaps I'd open 1NT if non-vulnerable and pass if vulnerable. But I'd be "feeling the table".

I can't bring myself to pass the third, with so much playing strength. But I wouldn't open 1♦, allowing the opponents to find their likely spade fit cheaply. I'd open 3♦ — that should steal the pot.

Dealer N

North: ♠ 105 ♥ KJ64 ♦ AK53 ♣ 1053
West: ♠ AQ832 ♥ 73 ♦ J84 ♣ K62
East: ♠ J64 ♥ 982 ♦ Q96 ♣ AJ94
South: ♠ K97 ♥ AQ105 ♦ 1072 ♣ Q87

S	W	N	E
		Pass	Pass
Pass(1)	1♠ (2)	Dbl	2♠
3♥	End		

(1) There's a case for South to open a third-in-hand 1♥, planning to pass any response.
(2) A classic light fourth-in-hand Rule of 15 1♠ opener.

West wisely led a passive trump v 3♥, declarer winning and immediately playing ♦AK and a third diamond, setting up dummy's lucky 13th after the suit split 3-3. Declarer was hoping to be able to discard a club on that long diamond but East (who had just won ♦Q) had other ideas, finding the excellent switch to ♣J (a surround play). Declarer covered with ♣Q, West winning ♣K and returning ♣6. East won ♣9, cashed ♣A felling dummy's ♣10 and now led ♠4. West had to score ♠AQ over declarer's ♠K and that was two down. andrew.robson@thetimes.co.uk

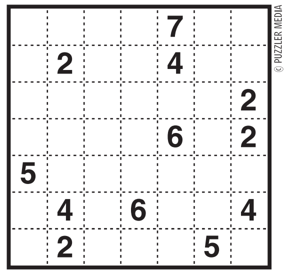
Brain Trainer

EASY 28 → +6 → x 3 → – 9 → 2/3 OF IT → + 8 → 50% OF IT → + 14 → x 2 → – 17 → ANSWER

MEDIUM 59 → x 6 → + 38 → + 1/4 OF IT → + 54 → 75% OF IT → x 2 → – 46 → 70% OF IT → – 77 → ANSWER

HARDER 205 → x 7 → + 245 → 90% OF IT → x 4 → + 994 → 6/7 OF IT → + 846 → 1/2 OF IT → – 498 → ANSWER

Cell Blocks No 4896



Divide the grid into square or rectangular blocks, each containing one digit only. Every block must contain the number of cells indicated by the digit inside it.

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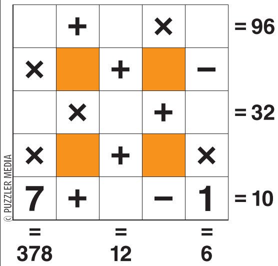
Polygon



From these letters, make words of **four** or more letters, always including the central letter. Answers must be in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, excluding capitalised words, plurals, conjugated verbs (past tense etc), adverbs ending in LY, comparatives and superlatives.
How you rate 15 words, average; 21, good; 26, very good; 31, excellent

Yesterday's answers
bond, bonus, boon, boson, bosun, bound, bund, noob, nous, onus, snob, snood, snub, soon, sound, **soundbox**, udon, undo

Set Square No 3532

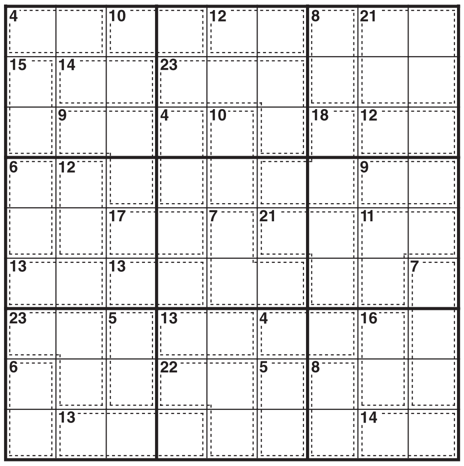


Enter each of the numbers from 1 to 9 in the grid, so that the six sums work. We've placed two numbers to get you started. Each sum should be calculated left to right or top to bottom.

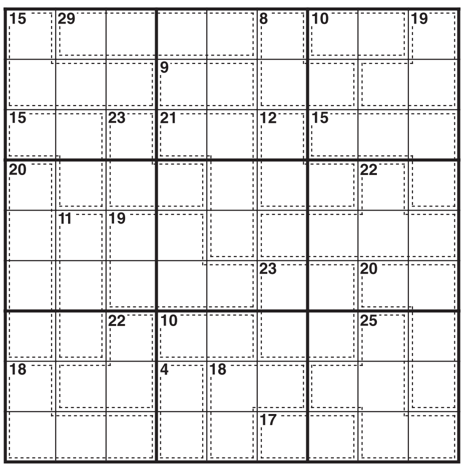
© PUZZLER MEDIA

Please note, BODMAS does not apply

Killer Moderate No 9081



Killer Deadly No 9082

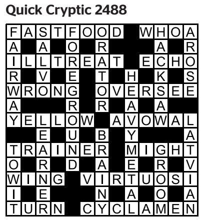


As with standard Sudoku, fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Each set of cells in its top-left corner. Within each set of cells joined by dotted lines must add up to the target number in its top-left corner. Within each set of cells joined by dotted lines, a digit cannot be repeated.

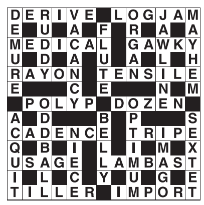
Cluelines Stuck on Sudoku, Killer or KenKen? Call 0901 293 6263 before midnight to receive four clues for any of today's puzzles. Calls cost £1 plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri 9am-5.30pm).

Solutions

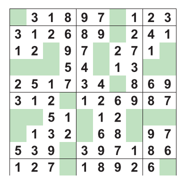
Quick Cryptic 2488



Codeword 5012



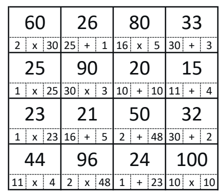
Kakuro 3528



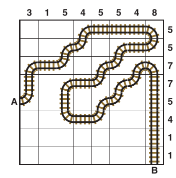
Sudoku 14,338

5	3	2	4	1	7	8	9	6
9	4	7	3	6	8	2	1	5
1	8	6	5	2	9	7	3	4
2	7	1	9	8	5	4	6	3
6	9	4	1	7	3	5	2	8
8	5	3	2	4	6	1	7	9
4	6	8	7	9	2	3	5	1
7	1	5	6	3	4	9	8	2
3	2	9	8	5	1	6	4	7

Tetonor 398



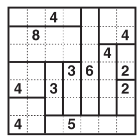
Train Tracks 2045



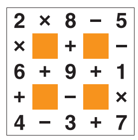
Sudoku 14,339

7	6	3	9	2	8	1	5	4
2	8	5	3	1	4	9	6	7
4	1	9	5	7	6	3	8	2
1	9	4	2	5	3	8	7	6
5	2	6	1	8	7	4	3	9
8	3	7	6	4	9	2	1	5
6	5	2	8	9	1	7	4	3
9	4	8	7	3	5	6	2	1
3	7	1	4	6	2	5	9	8

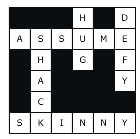
Cell Blocks 4895



Set Square 3531



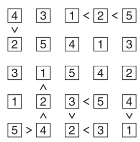
Lexica 7057



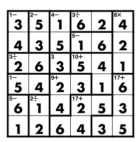
Sudoku 14,340

5	2	9	6	3	1	8	4	7
8	6	4	7	5	2	1	9	3
7	1	3	4	9	8	6	2	5
6	4	5	2	1	9	7	3	8
3	8	2	5	4	7	9	1	6
1	9	7	3	8	6	4	5	2
4	7	6	9	2	3	5	8	1
2	5	1	8	6	4	3	7	9
9	3	8	1	7	5	2	6	4

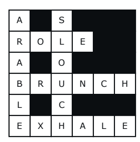
Futoshiki 4569



KenKen 6004



Lexica 7058



Killer 9079

8	1	3	6	7	9	4	5	2
7	9	5	2	4	1	3	8	6
2	4	6	8	3	5	7	9	1
3	2	9	7	6	4	5	1	8
5	8	7	1	9	2	6	4	3
4	6	1	3	5	8	2	7	9
1	7	4	9	2	3	8	6	5
6	3	8	5	1	7	9	2	4
9	5	2	4	8	6	1	3	7

Killer 9080

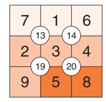
1	7	5	2	9	4	6	3	8
6	4	3	7	8	1	5	9	2
9	8	2	3	6	5	4	7	1
5	3	9	6	4	8	2	1	7
8	1	7	5	2	3	9	6	4
2	6	4	9	1	7	8	5	3
7	9	6	8	3	2	1	4	5
4	5	8	1	7	9	3	2	6
3	2	1	4	5	6	7	8	9

Today's solutions

Concise Quintagram
1 Obsess
2 Visage
3 Europa
4 Remiss
5 Clear-cut

Cryptic Quintagram
1 Halt
2 Tea set
3 Thereby
4 Heathen
5 Sabotage

Suko 3914



Brain Trainer
Easy 81
Medium 462
Harder 2,943

Word watch

Coarctate (a) Crowded together (*Collins*)
Torchon (a) A duster or dishcloth (*Chambers*)
Xenial (b) Of relations between host and guest (*OED*)

Chess — Winning Move

1 ... Qxb1+! 2 Kxb1 Rd1+ and now White's only further contribution to the game will be to decide whether to get mated by 3 Kc2 Rc1 or 3 Ka2 Ra1

Quiz

1 Merlin **2** Smash **3** US president **4** Northumberland **5** A dog **6** Coco Chanel **7** Cape Verde **8** Hydrogen **9** Sheldonian Theatre, named after Gilbert Sheldon **10** Cockney Rebel **11** Quanta Computer **12** Dammam **13** Christys' **14** Australian rules football or AFL **15** Dr Michael Mosley

MindGames

Word watch
David Parfitt

Coarctate
a Crowded together
b Pertaining to both poles
c An abrasive mineral

Torchon
a A duster or dishcloth
b A smooth domed gem
c A breed of carthorse

Xenial
a Warrior-like
b Of relations between host and guest
c A person born in the 2010s

Answers on page 15

Sudoku

Mild No 14,341

	8			4				
3		1			9	2		
		7	5			3	9	8
		3			1		8	
	7						3	
	1		4			9		
8	3	4			6	7		
		5	2			8		1
				8			6	

Difficult No 14,342

						7	5	
			8	7				9
7					6			2
1	8		3			9		
	9						3	
	5				9		7	
6	3							
9		4	2	6	1			
	1	2			7	6		

Fiendish No 14,343

		6		8		7	3	1
	1		3	6				8
9				4	7		2	
						3		
1				3	5		9	
	5		8	7				9
		9		1		4	6	7

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Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

The Times Daily Quiz
Olav Bjortomt

1 Anthony Head played Uther Pendragon in a TV series named after which legendary wizard?

2 In 1973, which instant mashed potato brand was first advertised with a group of robotic Martians?

3 The holder of which political office is often called the "leader of the free world"?

4 The most northerly town in England, Berwick-upon-Tweed is in which county?

5 What animal is an American bully XL?

6 The V&A is staging the first UK exhibition dedicated to which French fashion designer's work?

JOHN LAWRENCE



7 Which former Portuguese colony is named after the westernmost cape of Africa?

8 What is the only chemical element that does not contain any neutrons in its nucleus?

9 Which Oxford theatre is named after the Archbishop of Canterbury from 1663 to 1677?

10 Which English band had a No 8 hit with *Mr Soft* (1974)?

11 Dubbed the "Laptop King", Barry Lam founded which Taiwan-based maker of notebook computers in 1988?

12 The world's largest airport by area, King Fahd International Airport serves which capital of Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province?

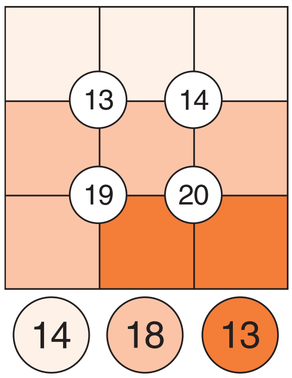
13 Which London hat-maker has been the "official helmet manufacturer of the UK Police Force for two centuries"? '

14 The Texas-born ruckman Mason Cox has become a star of which sport in Australia?

15 Which science presenter and journalist is pictured?

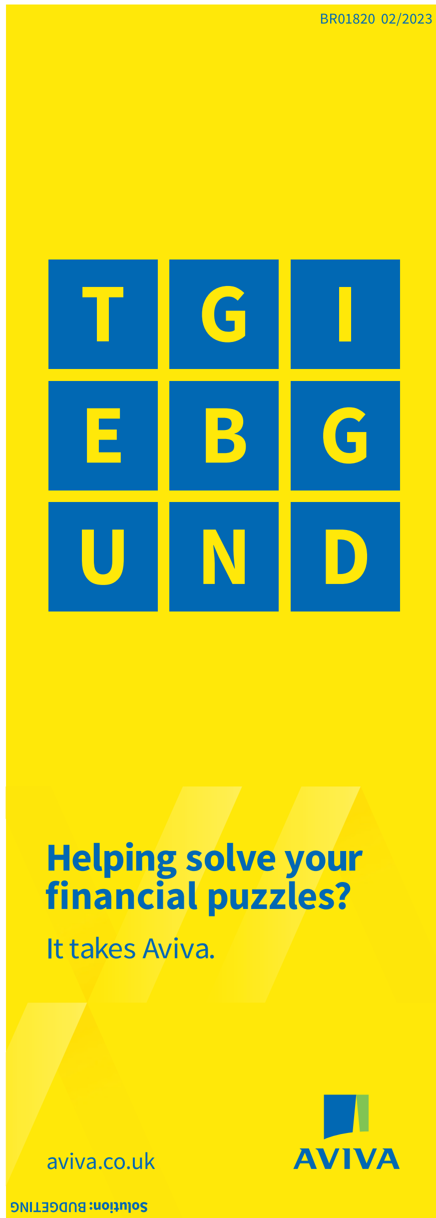
Answers on page 15

Suko
No 3914

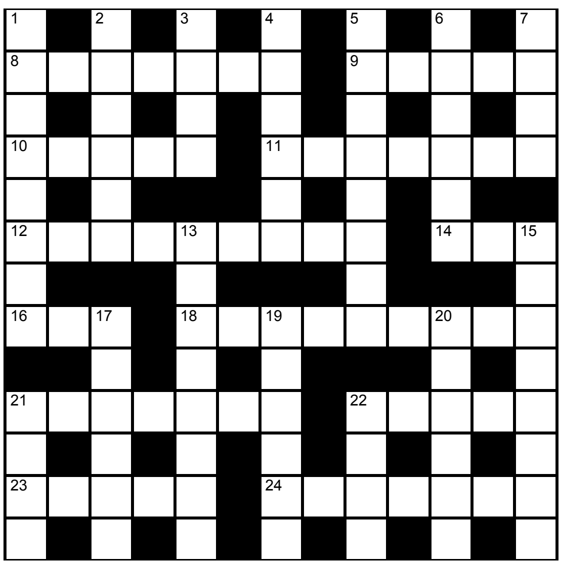


Place the numbers 1 to 9 in the spaces so that the number in each circle is equal to the sum of the four surrounding spaces, and each colour total is correct

For interactive puzzles visit thetimes.co.uk



The Times Quick Cryptic
No 2489 by Mara



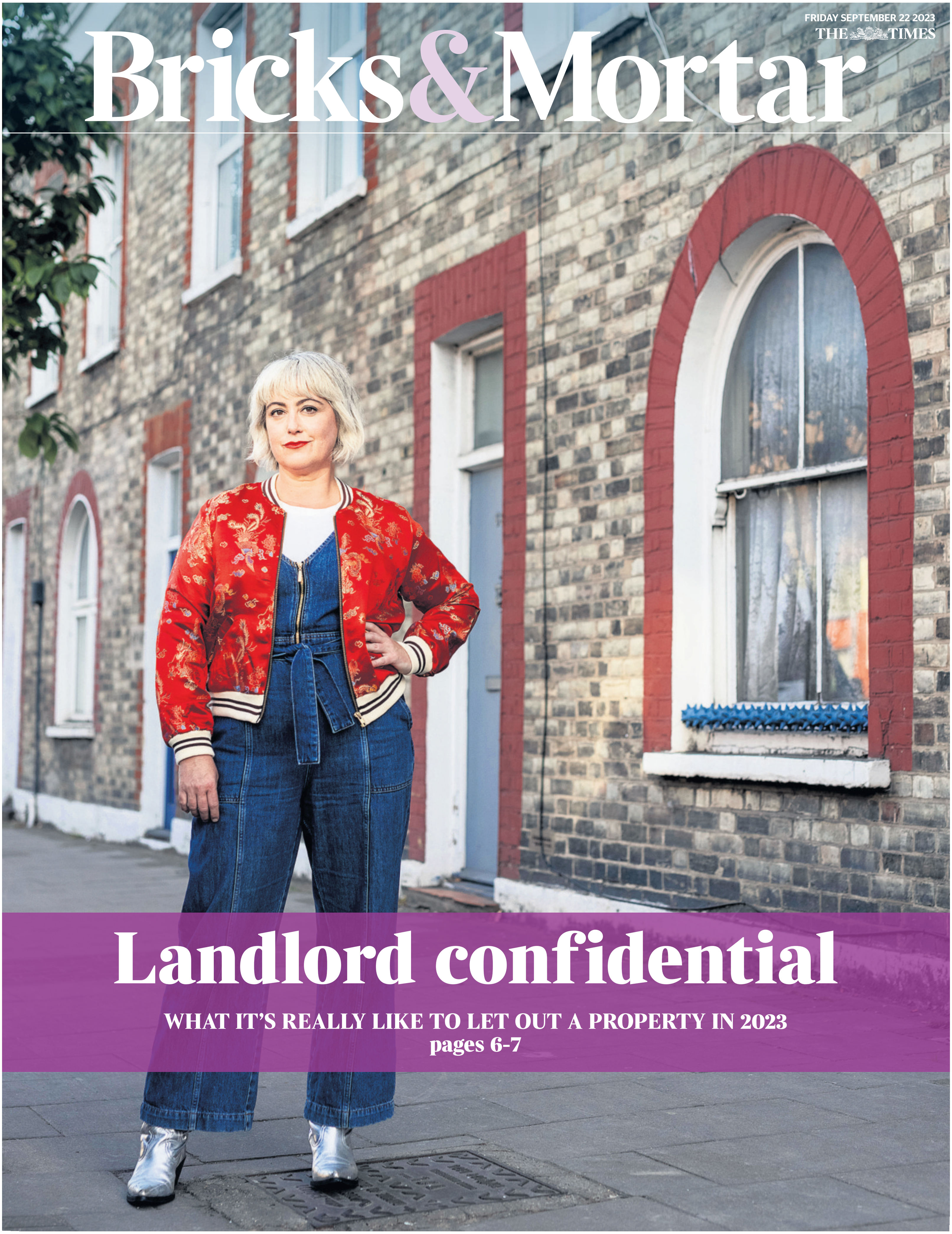
Across
8 Just erected, one side (7)
9 Tom is awfully wet (5)
10 Hold last of cattle, beef (5)
11 Trailblazer investing figure in seaside structure (7)
12 Give up the role, as tricky (4,5)
14 Some jacaranda, showy tree (3)
16 Without weight? That's amazing! (3)
18 Child needs formal outfit for clubs, say (5,4)
21 Red mark allowed (7)
22 Arabs reconstructed Iraqi city (5)
23 Great deal to draw (5)
24 Hollow bay in which battered can found (7)

Down
1 Plug a humble, small residence (8)
2 Sign with inclusion of a thousand large groups (6)
3 Initially on gargantuan rock, enormous giant (4)
4 Posh new patio, heaven (6)
5 International trader, I am to take on carrier (8)
6 Pictures soldiers put up swiped by American investigators (6)
7 Prison commotion (4)
13 Musical in Milan, hot dancing (8)
15 Possible boiler trouble (3,5)
17 Large amount, halibut ultimately consumed by whale at sea (6)
19 See it once transformed (6)
20 Knock off Austen novel (6)
21 Fish essence, did you say? (4)
22 First of bassists with musical group (4)

Yesterday's solution on page 15

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 22 2023
THE TIMES

Bricks&Mortar



Landlord confidential

WHAT IT'S REALLY LIKE TO LET OUT A PROPERTY IN 2023

pages 6-7

Home of the week

Felix Francis is selling the manor where he wrote his crime novels, says Hugh Graham

On the edge of the Cotswolds, the grade II listed Manor House in Hornton, Oxfordshire, looks cosy and idyllic: golden stone, an Aga in the kitchen. But behind the chocolate-box façade are some grisly stories: a man found dead with a pitchfork driven through his chest, a burnt corpse, a murder victim pushed from a balcony.

Not in real life but in the imagination of its owner, the crime writer Felix Francis. The son of Dick Francis, the author who sold more than 80 million novels set in the world of horse racing before he died in 2010, Felix has carried on writing books for his father's franchise.

Dick Francis, who rose to fame as the Queen Mother's jockey, wrote 39 whodunnits; Felix wrote the next 17, the most recent of which, *No Reserve*, is out next week. Fifteen of them have been written at the Manor House, in his office beside the Dick and Felix Francis library, a galleried room with floor-to-ceiling oak bookshelves crammed with the father and son's books.

Sign up to our property newsletter for the latest analysis, gossip, tips and tricks every Monday at thetimes.co.uk/newsletters

Felix, 70, ponders hypothetical crimes around the kitchen table with his wife, Debbie. "The other night I said, 'If you were having a party for your daughter's 18th birthday, and she went missing at the party, how long would it be before you would call the police?'"

Growing up in Blewbury, south Oxfordshire, was no different. "It made for an interesting life growing up in what I consider to be the greatest fiction factory of the 20th century," Felix says. He read his first Dick Francis novel when he was 13. He also wrote bits of them: "I designed a bomb that blew up an aeroplane in *Rat Race* when I was a 16-year-old A-level physics student."

They used to go for tea at Agatha Christie's house in nearby Wallingford. "All I remember is that she was rather scary and not very fond of teenage boys (at least not of me). I used to get sent to the kitchen as Dad and she spoke; I used to chat to her husband, Max Mallowan, the archaeologist, who used to regale me with exciting stories of ancient Egypt."

Felix started his career as a physics teacher, but tried writing a Dick Francis book when his father was 85, and hadn't written a novel for five years. Felix wasn't given a credit for writing *Under Orders* (2006), but nobody could tell the difference. "The critics said, 'The master is back'," Felix says.

The Manor House has been the site of some swell parties. It's also an ideal house for playing sardines with his grandchildren (he has two sons). "You can squeeze into all sorts of places. We've got staircases all over the place."

Felix bought the Manor House in 2007. "I'm now 70. We love having parties and Christmas here, but we're rattling around in this place. Most of the time we live in two or three rooms in a house that's got masses of them [it has seven bedrooms and is 8,200sq ft]."

He has been vocal in his opposition to inheritance tax, which is another factor in selling now. "It's much better to give money to your children when they need it." With the sale of the Manor House, he's hoping to make a killing.

£4.5 million; savills.com

***No Reserve* by Felix Francis is out on Thursday (Zaffre, £20). Buy from timesbookshop.co.uk or call 020 3176 2935. Discount for Times+ members**





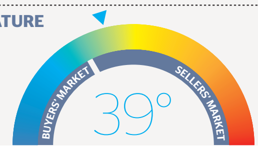
OX15 The postcode in numbers

In this part of Oxfordshire, 39% of the properties for sale are under offer, rising to 42% of those costing £1 million or more

38% Decrease in buyer demand in the past year

£558,783 is the average house price

TAKING THE TEMPERATURE
SELLERS' MARKET
The hotter the market, the quicker and easier it should be to sell a home



Source: Propcast and Rightmove

What £1 million buys you in …

Compiled by Victoria Brzezinski @vbrzezin

Tyne and Wear

Whickham Park House is a handsome, grade II listed home dating back to the mid-17th century with six bedrooms and set in about half an acre of private grounds and gardens. Inside there is an impressive 27ft drawing room, a reception hallway with original stained glass, a sweeping staircase and a magnificent orangery with stone flooring. The second floor has a kitchenette and three bedrooms — perfect for teenagers, live-in staff or multi-generational living. The house is in Whickham, five miles from Newcastle, and close to shops, cafés and restaurants in the village.

EPC Exempt
Upside A stonking 4,000 sq ft of living space.
Downside You may wince at your energy bill.
Contact sandersonyoung.co.uk



Warwickshire

Put your stamp on Square One, a mid-century marvel in need of modernisation, in the chichi enclave of Moreton Paddox, eight miles east of Stratford-upon-Avon. The sleek, four-bedroom bungalow was built in 1968, in a style that nods to the American architect Frank Lloyd Wright. Living spaces include sitting and dining rooms, a breakfast kitchen, a utility room and pottery studio. Part of a private estate, the mature grounds extend to just shy of two acres and are dotted with terraces, pools and woodland. There are plenty of country pubs within a ten-minute drive.

EPC F (potential C) — on a scale of A (best) to G (worst)
Upside Bucolic gardens.
Downside A contribution is made to the maintaining of the shared private drives on an ad hoc basis.
Contact pritchardandcompany.co.uk









Brief encounter
Ask the expert

Q I have been sharing my house with two lodgers for seven years. I gave them verbal notice I was planning to sell the property last year. Do they have any rights, if reasonable notice is given?

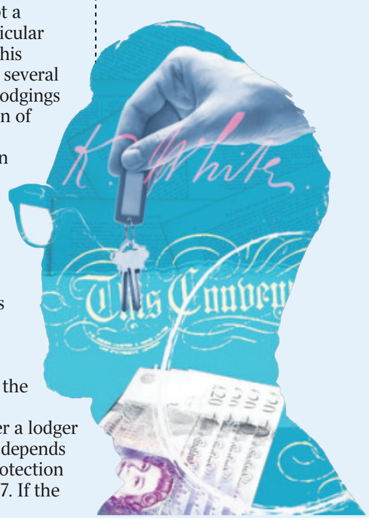
A Lodgings are simply a recognised category of licence arrangement. While a lease or tenancy gives a legal right in the land itself, licensees or lodgers have nothing more than bare permission to use the premises. Whether someone is a tenant or lodger depends on whether they have exclusive possession of the land.

It has been said there is a "spectrum of exclusivity ranging from the occupier of a detached property under a full repairing lease, who is without doubt a tenant, to the overnight occupier of a hotel bedroom who, however upmarket the hotel, is without doubt a lodger". Where a particular arrangement lies on this spectrum depends on several things. For example, lodgings often involve provision of services like cleaning, linen, refuse collection or meals. A person will generally also be a lodger if the owner retains day-to-day control of the rooms that are occupied. So, where the owner bans visitors or retains the right to change the allocated room, this usually indicates that the guest is a lodger.

In England, whether a lodger can be asked to leave depends on section 3 of the Protection from Eviction Act 1977. If the lodger lives in the landlord's home and shares their kitchen, bathroom or living room, the legislation requires them to be given "reasonable notice" to quit in writing.

In your particular case, your guests will be treated as lodgers rather than tenants if you provide them with services or keep significant control of their rooms. And if they share facilities with you, you need only give them "reasonable" written notice to quit.

Mark Loveday is a barrister with Tanfield Chambers. Email questions to brief.encounter@thetimes.co.uk



View the UK's most luxurious residential properties
MANSION GLOBAL
mansionglobal.com/london

Cheshire

Dating from either the 17th or 18th century, this period farmhouse was extended in the 1930s. The four-bedroom, three-bathroom semi-detached home is arranged over three floors and extends to about 3,500 sq ft. Outside, there are almost two acres of gardens, a croquet lawn, greenhouse, a small brick building used to store garden tools, a garage and a floodlit, full-size tennis court. The property has been owned since 1986 by the same family, who are only moving next door and love to play doubles. The house is near the village of Mouldsworth, just under ten miles from Chester city centre.

EPC C (potential B)
Upside The price has gone down from almost £1.2 million.
Downside You'll have to learn how to play tennis.
Contact gascoignehalman.co.uk



Spain

Moraira is a small, upmarket coastal town on the Costa Blanca, with a stunning five miles of beaches backed by mountains and vineyards. The town is about 50 miles north of Alicante and 75 miles south of Valencia. This modern villa sits in a private plot surrounded by landscaped gardens a short walk from the local beach. Inside there are three bedrooms, two bathrooms and two reception rooms. Outside, you'll find a heated swimming pool with automatic cover and pool shower, veranda, barbecue area and a garden with irrigation system. Access to the property is through a remote-controlled gated entrance with parking for two cars.

Upside Air con and underfloor heating.
Downside The bland interiors don't feel especially Spanish.
Contact fineandcountry.es



Moving stories

Your tales from up and down the property ladder

'I created a new life by the sea after losing my husband in the pandemic'

When my husband, Nicholas, and I decided to buy a two-bedroom seaview apartment in Hythe, on the Kent coast, the property was supposed to be our reward after decades of hard work *[says Sam Connolly, 59]*.

We had decided to sell the house where we had raised our daughter, cut back on work commitments, and enjoy an early semi-retirement by the sea.

However, by the time I was able to move into the flat the scenario was very different.

Nicholas was struck down by Covid in the autumn of 2021, a few weeks after we bought the flat. He spent eight weeks in hospital on a ventilator. I was prevented from visiting him and he died just before Christmas. He was 69.

The following month I moved into the flat alone.

Before the pandemic, Nicholas and I shared a three-bedroom detached house in Redhill, Surrey, close to the three florist shops we owned and ran together. With plenty of friends and a lively social life we were extremely happy — but by the start of 2019 we had begun to look ahead. I had been working six days a week for 33 years, and we were thinking it was the right time to slow down a bit.

The pandemic put our plans on hold but in the summer of 2021, Nicholas telephoned full of excitement saying he had found the perfect property. The flat in Hythe had sea views, the vibrant town centre was a short walk away, and we would be closer to our daughter, who lives in Canterbury.

We viewed the flat, loved it and by the end of August not only had we bought it (for £500,000), but a serious buyer was interested in our Surrey house.

With two houses at our disposal we were able to take our time with the move. Then, in October 2021, Nicholas came down with Covid. For a couple of days he soldiered on at home, but on the third day I came home to find him disorientated and seriously unwell. I called an ambulance which took him to hospital — my last words to him were "see you shortly" on the advice of the ambulance paramedic who wanted to keep him calm. Despite all medical efforts Nicholas died on December 20, 2021. I was not allowed to visit during that time, so we did not have that final conversation, and I had no idea what he would want me to do.



Nicholas and Sam Connolly; the view from Hythe beach in Kent

Have your say
Would you like to share your moving story? Email **carol.lewis@thetimes.co.uk**

I visited the flat that Christmas and, for want of a better plan, resolved to move in at the start of 2022, even though I didn't know a soul there.

Dealing with grief is one thing, but the practical upheavals I have suffered over the past two years have been considerable. I closed two of my shops during the pandemic, and Nicholas's death plunged our house into probate. The process took 19 months, by which time our buyer had moved on. Now that I am in a position to sell, I have missed out on the mid-pandemic race for space Now, rising interest rate rises have dented confidence in the housing market. I am still looking for a buyer, though.

I could have really done with some practical support to help unravel these problems. But there is no organisation that I can find that wants to help with small business advice. It is not easy because I am used to having Nicholas to chat things over with.

> **If I had not had such amazing neighbours, I don't know how I would have coped**

I have found great emotional solace in my new home. Proximity to the sea has been hugely healing, friends and family visit, and I also still have my shop, Greensleeves, to run in Redhill.

I have found the locals of Hythe refreshingly welcoming and unaffected. If I had not had such amazing neighbours, and been by the beach, I don't know how I would have coped. But there are nine of us [in the building] of all ages and we socialise together. I swim in the sea and there is a group which meets on a Sunday morning to swim together. People bring coffee and cake and we eat and talk, and I have made friends, and also at a walking group I now belong to.

There is still a huge financial black hole to deal with, but it is just beautiful here in Hythe — in some ways I have been fortunate.

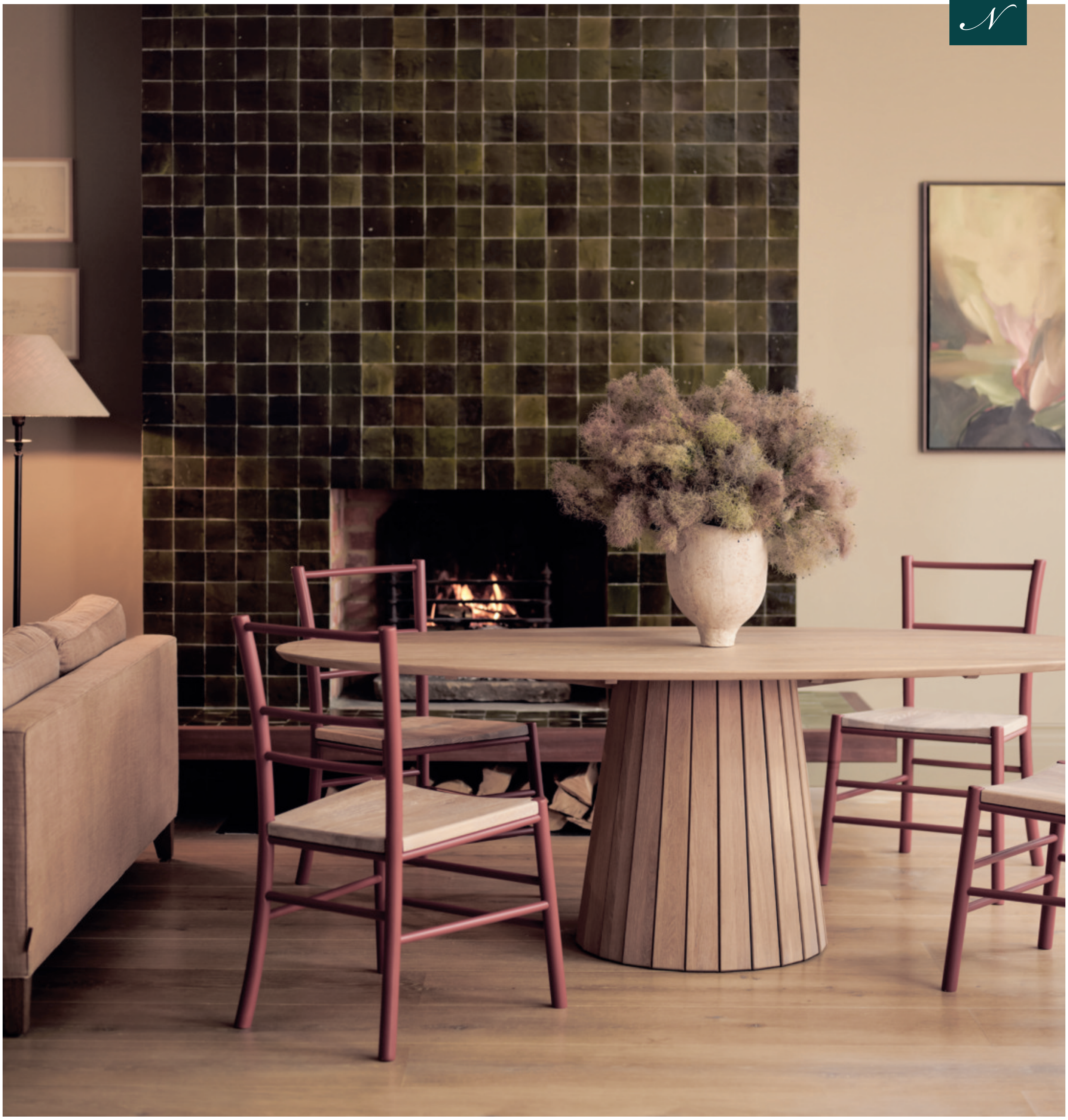
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Confessions of a reluctant landlord

COVER STORY

'Pick me!' begging letters, tax rises and red tape — letting out a flat shouldn't be this stressful, says Jane Mulkerrins



The multiple offers over the advertised rental price from potential tenants were a pleasant surprise. But I hadn't reckoned on how much the pleading, "pick me!" personal statements — how much they all admired my flat's aesthetic — tugged at my heartstrings, as well as stroked my ego. What quiet, careful, non-smoking, quasi-monastic tenants they would all make.

"Hobbies include being an actual house-lover and a plant Mum, curling up on the sofa with a book," wrote one, before going on to enthuse about the "gorgeous" (read: completely standard) gas stove.

They all gushed about the garden, the built-in bookshelves and the exposed brick, which, to be fair, were three of the features that had sold it to me 14 years earlier. Another pair of prospective tenants, living with one half's parents, wrote: "Wanting to take the next step as a couple and move into somewhere we can call home for a long while, with our house plants!"

I'd read, of course, about the dire dearth of rental properties, and younger colleagues had related tales of horror, from black mould and mice infestations to brutal gazumping. But when, in July, a matter of hours after posting the ad for my west London flat, the overwhelmed estate agents had to close the list for viewings, I realised just how chronic the shortfall has become.

Three days later, on a sunny Saturday morning, 25 applicants arrived over the course of an hour to hustle for a small one-bedroom flat on a busy main road, the site of a recent stabbing. By Monday morning, the agents had collated the four offers they considered the best — all of whom were offering more than the advertised rent (an already ludicrous £1,600 per month) — and sent them to me for consideration.

I felt like Simon Cowell on a talent show panel. All the prospective tenants were solid, financially solvent options and all had written strong personal statements. I had no idea how to choose between them.

It was a far cry from the spring of 2017, when, unable to find a single private tenant for the property, I'd let it to a council tenant. I had no objection at all to doing so. I mention it merely to illustrate that six years ago it was a struggle to fill the same flat that this summer was the subject of a bidding war.

I bought the property in the summer of 2009, when the UK property market was in the toilet — which, happily for me, offered my best shot at being able to get a first footing on the ladder. At the time, £200,000 still felt like a stretch, but I'd managed it. I had bought myself my very own little split-level, 50 square metres plus bijou garden home, backing onto a railway line.

And when, four months later, the newspaper I was working for folded (squeezed by the same global economic forces that had meant I could finally buy a flat) and we were all made redundant, I figured at least I'd snagged a mortgage before my credit score totally tanked.

> I saw 25 applicants arrive to hustle for a small flat on a busy main road, the site of a recent stabbing

With no job and no boyfriend, I moved to New York to freelance for a year (two years max, I promised my parents), and rented the flat out. When (many) things inevitably went wrong in my absence, I sent my cousin, who handily has a property services company, around to sort it out.

Almost 11 years later, I finally came back. And while I'd been running around the US, my little flat had doubled in value. I had no intention of becoming a landlord again, though. My plan was to sell up and buy a place in Brighton, where many of my friends had moved. But a decade of tenants had taken their toll, so I first needed to spend a year sinking significant time and money into it — including fixing the roof, repeatedly.

With the work all finished and the flat finally looking ship-shape, I put it on the market in August 2022, excited for my imminent new life on the coast … we all know what happened next. A month later, Liz Truss's disastrous mini-budget sent interest rates spiralling and mortgage approvals plummeting.

Mine is the perfect flat for a young first-time buyer — but young first-time buyers don't stand a chance with 6.5 per cent interest rates and strict stress tests from lenders. Financial instability meant even investors and cash buyers were exercising caution.

By spring this year, the flat was still on the market. Viewings had slowed to a meagre trickle. So I came up with a new plan: I'd remortgage the flat, releasing equity to allow me to buy a two-bed I'd fallen in love with in Brighton, and I'd rent the London flat out again.

Taking on two mortgages, in a time of terrifying interest rates. What could possibly go wrong?

The 25 applicants queueing along the street to see my flat is by no means an

T For more property tales go to thetimes.co.uk



Jane Mulkerrins

COVER: VICKI COUCHMAN FOR THE TIMES; HAIR/MAKE UP: FIONA MOORE

unusual occurrence. In a report published in July, commissioned by the BBC and Rightmove, a property to let in the UK now receives an average of 20 applicants (up from six in 2019). In London, 43 per cent fewer homes are available to rent compared with 2019.

Interest rate rises mean landlords have been forced to increase rents to cover their mortgages. This, coupled with tax rises, has led pressure groups to claim a wave of investors will soon sell up.

Since April 2020, landlords can no longer deduct all their mortgage expenses from their rental income to reduce their tax bills. Under the old system, higher-rate taxpayers effectively received 40 per cent tax relief on mortgage payments, but under the new system they receive a tax credit based on 20 per cent of their mortgage interest payments. In short, the tax bill on rental income for higher-rate taxpayers has doubled, drastically reducing overall earnings from rent.

That's the case for me. Yes, I can charge a frankly obscene amount of rent, but I won't be turning any sort of profit, as I'm getting clobbered by tax too.

A friend revealed last week that she's selling her south London rental flat in a "fire sale", as her mortgage on it has tripled, and, with the tax increase, she can no longer even cover her costs.

She's far from the only one. According to a report by the National Residential Landlords Association (NRLA), these cuts in mortgage interest tax relief have led directly to 1.2 million fewer properties available in the sector. However, evidence of a mass sell-off has, so far, been mixed.

In addition, as I discovered via a mind-boggling recent bill, the upfront costs of installing a tenant are now exorbitant. Renting a property out demands the following: an electrical installation condition report (I paid £180, plus 20 per cent VAT, of course) — and, what do you know, the electricians carrying out the report found some remedial work that needed to be done to make it compliant (another £165 plus VAT); a gas safety check (£95 plus VAT); an inventory (£140 plus VAT); a landlord tenancy agreement and administration fee (£165.83 plus VAT); a deposit fee (£50 plus VAT) — yes, that's £60 just to keep hold of my tenant's deposit — and mandatory professional cleaning (£210 plus VAT). Safety first, of course, but blimey, bureaucracy is expensive.

Now that I'm back in the UK, I don't need an agency to manage the property or even collect the rent, but just to find me a tenant — and I agreed to pay 7 per cent of the yearly rental fee for that, plus a renewal fee of 5 per cent.

When the agency asked if I'd be happy to give the tenant a two-year lease with a 12-month break clause, rather than just one year, I said yes. As a result, that mind-boggling bill — some £4,600 in fees — also included, without warning, 7 per cent of 24 months' worth of rent.

In spite of doing nothing to secure that second year of rent, beyond issuing a longer initial lease, the agency is attempting to charge me for two years of fees. I am pushing back. Wish me luck.

In the long term, I realise that holding onto my little London flat may prove a sound financial move, but there are many moments when it feels like more of a millstone. And the irony of being unable to sell it, but able to rent it out 25 times over, is not lost on me.

As for my new tenant, after much deliberation, I accepted the offer (£1,710 per month) from a young woman who'd given the reason for moving as "infidelity" (not hers). All else being equal, and ever keen to give a sister a break, I felt a fiancée who'd been cheated on — and her new kitten — were the most deserving of a fresh start at my flat.

Testing times
The best washing-up gloves



Marigold Extra-Life kitchen gloves
£3.95, justgloves.co.uk
★★★★★



Notes Triple-layer latex gloves with cotton lining
Fit and feel The cuff is a good length and the fit of the hand agreeably snug
Insulation Good protection from my ludicrously hot water
Lobster pick Picked up with ease
Burnt cheese test Passed
Verdict No wonder Marigolds are the nation's most loved rubber gloves

Compiled by
@Kat_Burroughs

You probably don't give washing-up gloves a second thought. Our snappy latex friends may seem insignificant, but think of best rubber glove selection as the theory of marginal gains applied to your home life.

In competitive cycling, for example, if you optimise each detail you have more chance of claiming a medal. At home, do the same via a pair of well-fitting, nonslip, good-value gloves to protect your hands from exposure to cleaning materials (dishpan hands) and you edge nearer to attaining domestic bliss.

Even though they cost less than £5 a pair, if you rip through washing-up gloves at the rate I do, it pays to search out substitutes for the premium brands.

Trigger warning: there is a possibility that a glance at this page may give some readers goose bumps, and the promise of a column on stretchy under-the-sink hand gear will make them shiver with antici… pation (à la *Rocky Horror Picture Show*).

I'm a fan of #CleanTok, the household hygiene arm of TikTok, and there are folks out there who really, really love rubber gloves. Visit @elbowgreaseUK for a latex glove snapathon, or look at the hashtag #asmrgloves (autonomous sensory meridian response is a frisson sparked by noises from gum-chewing to rubber glove stretching), and tell me that the humble kitchen glove isn't hot stuff.

Parking the niche appreciation aspect, it's time to find out which of the gloves triumphed. I called in five pairs in the hope of finding a good all-rounder at a bargain price. They were used to wash up plates and glasses, using my favourite compostable dishcloth from Jangneus, and were judged on grip and dexterity (could I easily retrieve a lobster pick from below the waterline?), and the protection they gave from my scaldingly hot water.

I devised a final challenge, the "burnt cheese test", which involved scratching off the crusty bits from a toastie tray using my nail through the gloves without making a hole in the thumb. The makers may not feel this was fair, but we all do it, so I'd argue it's a reasonable test.

There is no denying that the market leader from Marigold, first developed in 1947, makes a top glove. But prepare yourself for a shock — the standout design for me was a mint and white iteration from Ikea that costs just £1. What's not to glove about that?



Next week's test
Bluetooth speakers

Ikea Rinnig cleaning gloves
£1, ikea.com
★★★★★



Best buy

Notes Household and garden all-rounders, Rinnig comes in green or pink
Fit and feel Comfortable but snappy when exiting. Perhaps order a size up?
Insulation Not great under the hot tap
Lobster pick Easy — most dexterous by far.
Burnt cheese test Passed
Verdict The standout combination of value, looks and practicality wins

Asda Extra Life gloves
£1.50 reduced to £1.35, asda.com
★★★☆☆



Notes Suitable for all household tasks, with textured palm and fingers for extra grip
Fit and feel The cotton-lined latex gloves are comfortable, grippy and fit snugly
Insulation Protects well from hot water
Lobster pick Easily grasped
Burnt cheese test Passed
Verdict? Best supermarket own-brand

Essential Waitrose household gloves
£1.50, waitrose.com
★★★☆☆



Notes The rubber has increased strength and durability and is lined with cotton flock. Designed to fit longer fingers (or nails)
Fit and feel Outstanding for comfort and very easy to get on and off
Insulation Not insulated enough
Lobster pick A bit awkward
Burnt cheese test Failed
Verdict Best for Kim Kardashian

Tesco Extra Wear rubber gloves
£2.15, tesco.com
★★☆☆☆



Notes Latex gloves with a flock lining. This is Tesco's premium pair
Fit and feel Very comfortable and thick. Not as closely fitted to my hand as others
Insulation Better insulation than other supermarket own-brand gloves
Lobster pick Tricky to pick up
Burnt cheese test Failed
Verdict A mix of good and subpar



SAFE AS HOUSES – THE RETROFIT REVOLUTION

How two owners of draughty old properties used an eco-friendly scheme to transform their homes and slash their heating bills

Last year digital communications trainer Hannah France was offered a free energy assessment and a potential overhaul for her home.

“I thought it was a scam, but once I’d verified it independently with NatWest, it seemed like a no-brainer,” she says.

“Our house is very old, sits on a hill, is draughty and has two exposed walls, so it’s freezing in winter and expensive to heat. Anything that tackled those issues was going to make a big difference to our bills.”

High energy prices remain one of the most significant causes of financial pressure on households struggling with the cost of living, with a key factor the UK’s many draughty, energy inefficient homes. Not only can these be expensive to run but they are also a major contributor to emissions, emitting 20 per cent of all our carbon.

Of the UK’s 28 million properties, a 2019 estimate suggests around 19 million are in need of some kind of energy efficiency upgrade. From April to June this year, 42 per cent were rated below the proposed minimum EPC energy band of C.



A year ago, NatWest announced measures designed to promote greener properties. This included a one-off demonstrator project taking a number of carefully selected customers through a fully funded home retrofit, to understand the key challenges and obstacles faced when it comes to greener homes.

Retrofitting refers to taking measures that can improve the energy efficiency of an existing property, including insulation, new heating systems and solar panels.

In partnership with British Gas, Worcester Bosch and Quidos, the bank chose nine EPC D-G rated properties for a full assessment and refit. Hannah’s 20th-century mid-terrace in Pontypool was one, Phil Astbury’s terraced house in St Helens was another.

“NatWest contacted me to ask if I would be interested in talking to them about how environmentally friendly the house was. It wasn’t,” says Phil, an IT systems engineer with the NHS. “It was old, draughty and the windows let out heat. I could cope but it wasn’t fair to my kids when they stayed here.”

> **The house feels warmer, less draughty – I had no idea how much cold had been seeping in**

An air source heat pump, solar panels and double glazing were installed at his 1930s property within a period of ten days.

“Everything was up and running immediately, supplying electricity to the pump,” he says. “The house feels much cosier now. The added bonus came when I found it was going to cost three grand to fix my old car. I realised it made sense to go electric, so I leased an EV through an NHS scheme and installed a charger. I can charge the car in the morning, get a discount, and it’s much cheaper to run. I feel like I’ve won the lottery.”

Hannah’s home was also fitted with solar panels, but the gamechanger for her exposed home was external wall insulation.

“The house is warmer, less draughty and maintains heat perfectly,” she says. “The day after it was finished I came downstairs and realised I couldn’t tell what temperature it was outside. Usually it’s the same as the garden. I had no idea how much cold was seeping in. Now all the rooms feel balanced and welcoming. And the finish is perfect, it looks like brick and blends in with the street.”

For more on the pilot’s findings, check out the new *Home is Where the Heat Is* report from the Sustainable Homes and Buildings Coalition. It’s important to note that while retrofitting could save money in the long run, the upfront cost is prohibitive to many so financial support will often be required.

For Hannah, such measures represent the way forward for our legacy housing. “As well as benefiting the environment, I love that we’re maintaining and future-proofing a property that has been in the community for decades and will pass on to future generations,” she says. “Sustainability, solar power and insulation have to be standard as we progress. I couldn’t have done it without NatWest, so there has to be more support.”

To regenerate old properties, save money and reduce emissions, retrofitting could be the future.

NatWest Group

To learn about our Greener Homes Retrofit Project, visit **natwest.com/retrofit**

All information within this article is produced by The Times in collaboration with NatWest Group. Some views expressed in this article are not necessarily those of NatWest. Stats sourced from the NatWest Greener Homes Attitude Tracker (45,000 cohort) and NatWest’s Springboard to Sustainable Recovery report.

Property politics

How will a general election affect the housing market — and which party really is the homeowner's friend? By Melissa York



Who would you trust with the biggest investment you'll ever make; the Labour Party or the Conservatives? A year on from Liz Truss's mini-budget, with mortgage interest rates of 6.5 per cent biting into incomes, it feels as though the connection between politics and the housing market has never been stronger.

The shadow of last September's fiscal fiasco has been instrumental in cooling down 2021's overheated property market. The average asking price is down 0.4 per cent over the year, Rightmove reports, the biggest drop since March 2019. More than a third of properties listed for sale on the property portal have been reduced in price, by £22,700 on average.

And there's more upheaval on the way. The next UK general election must be held by January 2025. Pundits predict the prime minister Rishi Sunak will wait for inflation to settle before going to the polls in the autumn 2024.

YouGov polling suggests that over half of British adults think there will be a Labour victory, meaning a change of government is a real prospect.

One ill omen for the Conservatives is falling house prices. A report by the buying agency Middleton Advisors, compiled by the housing analyst Yolande Barnes, places 50 years of housing data in political context.

It found that falling house prices were a feature in two out of three regime changes since 1975, whereas there has been no change in the governing political party during a period of rising house prices since 1979.

Kate Eales, the head of regional residential agency at Strutt & Parker, says: "Over the last 40 years, the property market has become more political with each election. From right to buy to stamp duty reform and a mansion tax, buyers and sellers typically become more cautious around an election in anticipation of change."

Which party is the homeowner's friend?

Real house price growth in the past five decades has risen the most under Labour governments, while four out of the five governments that presided over falling house prices were Conservative.

Middleton's analysis also shows that the Labour prime minister Tony Blair oversaw house price increases of 9 per cent per year on average during his decade-long premiership. Between June 2001 and May 2005, when Blair was prime minister, house prices increased by almost £48 a day. Under John Major's Conservative government, which started during a global recession in 1990, house prices increased by £3 a day.

> **"When Tony Blair was prime minister, house prices increased by £48 a day"**

This may surprise market watchers because the Conservative Party has traditionally styled itself as the "party of homeownership".

The property consultancy JLL dug into its data over the past ten years and found that most of the Blair price growth happened in the early days of New Labour when the economy was buoyant.

This period also coincided with the buy-to-let boom between 2000 and 2007, when UK Finance figures show that the number of buy-to-let mortgages increased from 48,400 to 346,000.

So, is it the economy, stupid?

The numbers suggest that the Labour Party may have been lucky enough to preside over more periods of economic prosperity than the Conservatives and it is this that has played a bigger role in boosting house prices than its policies.

However, policy undoubtedly influences economic conditions. Real house prices declined by 5 per cent under Labour's Gordon Brown, who presided over the worst of the global financial crisis between June 2007 and May 2010, according to Barnes's report. In comparison, real house prices have fallen almost 13 per cent under Rishi Sunak, who has had to deal with difficult economic circumstances.

Introducing housing policies before an election is rarely enough to boost house prices. Government housing policy needs time to "bed in", Lucian Cook, head of residential research at Savills estate agency, says "to give [politicians] the opportunity to campaign on the back of its track record".

A good example of this is the introduction of help to buy in 2013, followed by the stamp duty reform in 2014, which allowed the Conservative Party to put homeownership at the forefront of its 2015 election campaign.

Do elections move housing markets?

There is little evidence that elections themselves move housing markets (house prices) or affect the number of transactions (sales). Cook says: "For a general election to have an impact on the housing market the outcome would need to raise the possibility of a material change in the macroeconomic backdrop, direct housing policy or property taxation. Often that isn't the case."

Prime markets: UK house price swings since 1976

Prime minister	From	To	% change during premiership
James Callaghan	April 76	May 79	4.20
Margaret Thatcher	May 79	Nov 90	1.70
John Major	Nov 90	May 97	-1.92
Tony Blair	May 97	Jun 07	9.00
Gordon Brown	Jun 07	May 10	-5.03
David Cameron	May 10	Jul 16	0.74
Theresa May	Jul 16	Jul 19	-1.19
Boris Johnson	Jul 19	Sept 22	2.39
Liz Truss	Sept 22	Oct 22	-5.39
Rishi Sunak	Oct 22	Present	-12.96

Source: Middleton Advisors

Estate agents usually report a market slowdown in the immediate run-up to an election though as buyers and sellers adopt a "wait and see" approach.

The threat of a higher regulatory or tax regime can spook markets. But this only tends to affect the top end of the market, where buyers are most affected by wealth taxes.

For the same reason, second-home sales tend to slow down too, Josephine Ashby, from John Bray Estates in north Cornwall, says. When elections are held in May, she says the fear of change "tends to take the wind out of the usual spring market".

The majority of the market, however, appears to be less buffeted by ballots. Across the four elections since 2010, there were 1 per cent more sales in the three months after election month compared with the three months prior, JLL data shows.

How could the upcoming election change the housing market?

In the midst of a cost of living crisis, housing may be a bigger issue in the next election than it has been in recent years.

> **"There is often a market slowdown before an election as buyers and sellers adopt a wait and see approach"**

Each party will need to demonstrate that it can bring inflation under control. Their manifestos will also need to offer something to private renters, "who have become more important to securing potential swing seats", Cook says.

The delay of the second reading of the Renters Reform Bill is not likely to endear the Conservatives to younger or less affluent voters. However, it could win the Tories the landlord vote, as could ditching new energy efficiency requirements, which are set to cost private landlords £9,260 per property on average.

Higher mortgage rates have priced out many first-time buyers without access to the Bank of Mum and Dad. While the Conservatives have introduced discount schemes such as First Homes and 95 per cent mortgage loan guarantees, these have not been enough to counter higher interest rates and they do not appear to have a successor to Help to Buy in the works.

Help to Buy has been blamed for artificially pushing up new-build house prices and any demand-boosting policy is likely to be scrutinised for its ability to distort the housing market.

The Labour Party, meanwhile, has a homeownership target of 70 per cent (it currently stands at 64 per cent) and it is looking at a state-backed mortgage guarantee for people who can afford mortgage repayments but cannot save for a deposit.

Property pundits seem satisfied by the assurances of Rachel Reeves, the shadow chancellor, who recently ruled out wealth taxes on assets. However, there has been talk around raising council tax for second homes, giving first-time buyers priority to purchase new-builds and raising stamp duty for foreign property-buyers.

Perhaps the boldest policy is Labour's pledge to scrap non-domiciled tax status, which allows people to live in the UK without paying tax on their global earnings. There are about 68,000 such individuals, mainly in London.

"If members of this small but economically significant group decided to vote with their feet and exit the UK, it could have a disproportionate impact on the very top end of the housing market," Camilla Dell, the buying agent, says.

All of these policies are likely to affect the prime market and investors the most, rather than mainstream buyers and sellers, but critics say it could impact supply at a time when the housing shortage is acute.

This year, the Conservatives ditched their annual house-building target of 300,000 homes, but Labour plans to reinstate mandatory targets for local authorities.

Cook concludes: "While that is unlikely to significantly affect the market in the run up to the election, it probably has the greatest long-term implications for house price growth and activity levels, provided it results in concrete policies rather than arbitrary house building targets."

GEOFF FOLLOWS IN HIS MUM'S FOOTSTEPS BY CHOOSING CHURCHILL



Having watched his mum enjoy the retirement living lifestyle 20 years ago at Churchill's Jubilee Lodge in Seaton, Geoff Sharpe knew it made sense to follow her example by purchasing a new apartment at Riverain Lodge in Taunton.



Geoff meeting Churchill's Chairman Spencer J McCarthy

Geoff says, *"When my mother passed away and I had to manage the sale of her apartment I was pleased with the price it achieved, which I think was roughly the same as she had originally paid for it. From what I recall it didn't take long to sell, once they got the asking price right. I can't remember the exact figures, but I do know that she thoroughly enjoyed her time there, and you can't put a price on that."*

"I certainly didn't feel ripped off and that's why I've chosen Churchill again for my own retirement apartment in Taunton."

Geoff's mum enjoyed a happy retirement in Seaton, *"Mum and I investigated Jubilee Lodge in the early 2000s and eventually purchased what was then the last unsold apartment. We used the Home Exchange service and she was able to move in within a few days. She enjoyed her time in Jubilee Lodge until she passed away in 2007 aged 93. I still visit a few of her old friends – yes, they have been there for over 20 years!*

"Jubilee Lodge was then and still is an attractive, delightful building. I was always struck by the relaxing and peaceful atmosphere there which is still present. What is equally rewarding is that I find the same atmosphere, security, and calmness here at Riverain Lodge. The same thoughtfulness and quality of design and convenience doesn't happen by accident, it must be part of Churchill Retirement Living genetics!"

What made Geoff fall in love with Riverain Lodge...

"I like the design of the building and the innovative heating system, the location, and the quality of the build at Riverain Lodge is also great, the apartments are very thoughtfully equipped. I love the quietness and peacefulness of being in the building, and how well it fits into the landscape and its location is very convenient for Taunton's facilities.

"My advice to anyone thinking of moving to a Churchill Development would be to investigate everything as much as possible. Ask many questions of the Sales Team – they will have the answers but can't give you the information if you don't ask. If you don't know the area already, explore it.

"Personally, I am very happy here. The Lodge Manager and other management staff are very pleasant and helpful. I especially like the feeling of calm and peacefulness as soon as you enter the building."

For more information and to find a Churchill development near you call: 0800 090 3455 or visit churchillretirement.co.uk

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“Mum was happy and thoroughly enjoyed her time there, and you can’t put a price on that”

Geoff Sharpe watched his mum enjoy the retirement living lifestyle 20 years ago and he knew it made sense to follow her example by purchasing a new Churchill apartment for himself.

“Choosing Churchill again was an obvious decision. This is my second experience with Churchill and it’s as fantastic as the first. I love the independent living, feeling safe and secure, it must be part of Churchill’s genetics.”

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APARTMENTS FOR SALE - Bristol Yate; **Bucks** Aylesbury, Burnham, Marlow, Princes Risborough; **Cambs** Huntingdon; **Cornwall** Newquay; **Cumbria** Kendal, Penrith; **Devon** Sidmouth; **Dorset** Highcliffe-on-Sea; **Essex** Witham; **Gloucs** Cheltenham; **Hants** Basingstoke, Farnborough, Fleet, Hythe, Lymington, Park Gate, Portswood; **Herts** Hitchin; **Kent** Orpington, Paddock Wood, Rainham, Swanley; **Leicestershire** Market Harborough; **Middlesex** Pinner; **Norfolk** Diss; **Northants** Towcester; **Notts** Ruddington; **Oxfordshire** Abingdon-on-Thames, Kidlington, Thame; **Shropshire** Bridgnorth, Ludlow; **Somerset** Taunton; **Suffolk** Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill; **Surrey** Ashtead, Bagshot, Camberley, Carshalton, Epsom, Oxted, Reigate, Selsdon, Shepperton, Staines-upon-Thames, Walton-on-Thames; **Sussex**, Eastbourne, East Grinstead, Peacehaven; **West Midlands** Kings Heath, Kings Norton, Knowle, Shirley; **Wilts** Calne, Chippenham, Malmesbury.

COMING SOON - Cambs Great Shelford; **Cheshire** Handforth; **Devon** Barnstaple, Honiton, Totnes; **Essex** Saffron Walden; **Hants** Drayton, Fareham; **Herts** Hertford; **Kent** Gravesend, Larkfield, Tenterden, Tonbridge, Staplehurst, Westwood Cross; **Northants** Brackley; **Notts** Beeston; **Oxfordshire** Banbury, Bicester, Didcot; **Somerset** Wells; **Surrey** Cranleigh; **Sussex** Bexhill-on-Sea, Southwater; **West Midlands** Aldridge; **Wirral** West Kirby; **Worcestershire** Evesham; **Yorkshire** Wigginton.

AWAITING PLANNING - Berks Hungerford; **Bristol** Staple Hill; **Bucks** Newport Pagnell; **Cambs** St Neots; **Cheshire** Penketh, Wilmslow; **Devon** Exmouth; **Dorset** Christchurch, Shaftesbury; **Essex** Old Harlow; **Hants** Romsey; **Kent** Canterbury; **Leicestershire** Oadby; **Somerset** Street; **Suffolk** Felixstowe; **West Midlands** Kingswinford.

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FEATURE **BELBROUGHTON, WORCESTERSHIRE**



Detached house with 14 bedrooms



Introducing Bradford House Estate: A Grade II* Listed country house with seven beds, cottage, coach house, equestrian facilities, and 33 acres.

The owner's favourite room
"It has to be the extremely elegant drawing room extension, which was designed by renowned architect Robert Adam – said to be one of King Charles's favourite architects."

Contact: 01825 767 575
EPC Exempt | Council Tax: H | Tenure: Freehold
£4,500,000



SANDBANKS POOLE
Sandbanks Beach Front House/Plot – NOW AVAILABLE – Best Bids By Friday 29th September at 4pm.
EPC: D | Council Tax: TBC | Tenure: Freehold
Contact: 01202 076297 £4,000,000



RUSTINGTON WEST SUSSEX
Breathtaking, expansive sea views. Everything about this spectacular home has been beautifully designed with the views in mind.
EPC: B | Council Tax: G | Tenure: Freehold
Contact: 07507 114672 £4,000,000



BURSLEDON HAMPSHIRE
Substantial character property with circa 3.5 acres and separate detached cottage enjoying privacy and stunning views along the River Hamble.
EPC: D | Council Tax: H | Tenure: Freehold *offers over*
Contact: 02382 549200 £3,500,000



WINSTER LAKE DISTRICT
Secluded setting, extensive period property, five receptions, six bedrooms, one bedroom annexe. Garaging, wine cellar, outdoor kitchen, set in circa 3 acres.
EPC: F | Council Tax: H | Tenure: Freehold
Contact: 01539 733500 £3,500,000



WIMBLEDON VILLAGE LONDON
A timeless and charming six bedroom, Victorian semi-detached family home, an elegant and spacious haven set over four floors in Wimbledon Village.
EPC: D | Council Tax: G | Tenure: Freehold
Contact: 020 8798 2135 £3,350,000



ST KATHERINE'S DOCK LONDON
An architecturally significant lateral apartment with unrivalled views of St Katherine's Dock Marina. Covering over 2,200 sq. ft of lateral living space.
EPC: C | Council Tax: F | Tenure: Leasehold
Contact: 020 3411 2206 £3,000,000



ASCOT BERKSHIRE
A fantastic five double bedroom family home in this newly built development by Grosvenor Homes, serving up the perfect balance of tranquil living.
EPC: TBC | Council Tax: TBC | Tenure: Freehold
Contact: 020 3940 5138 £2,700,000



COLDHARBOUR SURREY
Four bedroom, exceptional cottage nestled in the picturesque Surrey Hills, surrounded by four acres of breathtaking beauty.
EPC Exempt | Council Tax: H | Tenure: Freehold *OIEO*
Contact: 07507 114672 £1,750,000



WRAYSBURY SURREY
Nestled in the charming community of Wraysbury, is this delightful four bed, generously sized home with a large annexe and 75 ft private moorings, ideal for families.
EPC: E | Council Tax: H | Tenure: Freehold
Contact: 020 3912 3425 £1,550,000



NUTBOURNE WEST SUSSEX
A 3,000 sq. ft one-of-a-kind, Scandinavian-designed retreat, built to the highest specifications and sprawling gardens spanning just under 1 acre.
EPC: D | Council Tax: G | Tenure: Freehold
Contact: 01243 908077 £1,500,000



CHICHESTER WEST SUSSEX
Enjoy the secluded position adjacent to the Roman City Walls whilst experiencing the advantages of living in the heart of this thriving, historic Cathedral City.
EPC: B | Council Tax: F | Tenure: Freehold
Contact: 01243 908077 £975,000



BOSHAM WEST SUSSEX
A 2,851 sq. ft, Grade II Listed cottage with an annexe, heated outdoor pool, double garage and south facing garden.
EPC: D | Council Tax: F | Tenure: Freehold
Contact: 01243 908077 £945,000

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Pompeii, Paestum & Herculaneum

Departures | April to October 2024

EIGHT DAYS FROM
£1,549*
per person

Save up to £200 per couple on selected departures

Winter departure also available from £1,499

Price Includes

- Return flights from London, overseas transfers, other transportation and porterage
- Seven nights in a four-star hotel
- Seven breakfasts, seven dinners
- Services of a Travelsphere Holiday Director
- Pozzuoli's Roman remains, Baia and Cumae
- The ruins of Pompeii Villa Poppaea at Oplontis and Herculaneum
- Paestum temples
- Pizza night at a local Pizzeria
- Enjoy a candlelit dinner on the hotel's wisteria-shaded terrace (May to October)

Mount Vesuvius offers stunning backdrops as you explore seven exceptional archaeological sites. Journey to Pozzuoli and discover its Roman amphitheatre. Experience the archaeological park of Baia and take in the incredible ruins at Cumae. The city of Pompeii, frozen in time by Mount Vesuvius, offers remarkable sightseeing as you stroll down its incredibly preserved streets. Uncover the three magnificent Doric temples at Paestum and the historic Villa Poppaea at Oplontis. Visit the site of Herculaneum, which was also buried in ash by Vesuvius's 79 AD eruption, and you've options to walk to the volcano's summit and visit the chic island of Capri.

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The Best of Sicily

Departures | April to September 2024

EIGHT DAYS FROM
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per person

Save up to £200 per couple on selected departures

Price Includes

- Return flights from London, overseas transfers, other transportation and porterage
- Seven nights in four-star hotels
- Seven breakfasts, one lunch, seven dinners
- Services of a Travelsphere Holiday Director
- Taormina tour followed by granita tasting
- Ascend Mount Etna by cable car
- Visit the Roman Villa del Casale
- Explore the ancient Valley of the Temples
- Explore Palermo and enjoy a street food experience

On this delightful Sicilian journey, discover evocative landscapes sweeping down to pretty seaside towns, explore Taormina, with its magnificent Greco-Roman theatre and marvel at the brooding Mount Etna, which forms a dramatic backdrop to your discoveries. Visit the 4th century Villa Romana del Casale overloaded with the world's richest collection of Roman mosaics, the Valley of the Temples and onto Palermo with its beautiful Monreale Cathedral. Palermo is also famous for its street food tradition, and you'll experience this first hand.

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15 DAYS FROM
£2,799* per person

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Grand Tour of Italy

Departures | May to October 2024

Travel from the top to the toe of Italy on an amazing tour and be introduced to many of the country's iconic highlights – explore the canals of Venice, visit the 'Field of Miracles' and the world-famous Leaning Tower of Pisa. Travel through Tuscany's beautiful countryside enroute to Rome where you can throw a coin in the Trevi Fountain. Visit the scenic Sorrento Peninsula, wander through the ruins of Pompeii before you take in the magnificent views of brooding Mount Etna on the stunning island of Sicily. But that's not all – along the way enjoy an array of local flavours including a delicious ice cream from famous Sorbetteria Castiglione.

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Price Includes

- Return flights from London, overseas transfers & other transportation
- 14 nights in four-star hotels
- 14 breakfasts, one lunch, eight dinners
- Services of a Travelsphere Holiday Director
- Tours of Venice, Florence and Rome
- Visits to Treviso, Bologna, the Leaning Tower of Pisa, Orvieto and Taormina
- Enter Montecassino Abbey
- Explore the ruins of Pompeii

Memorable Moment

In Bologna stop at the famous La Sorbetteria Castiglione for a tasting of delicious ice cream. This artisan ice cream parlour is famous for its incredible range of flavours and mouth-watering taste.



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A Week in Andalucía

Departures | November 2023 to November 2024

EIGHT DAYS FROM
£1,249*
per person

Save up to £200 per couple on selected departures

Price Includes

- Return flights from London, overseas transfers & other transportation
- Seven nights in a four-star hotel
- Seven breakfasts, one lunch, seven dinners
- Services of a Travelsphere Holiday Director
- Explore Andalucia's regional capital Seville, and enjoy a light lunch in one of the fine tapas bars
- Sightseeing in Cordoba
- Explore the Alhambra Palace and Granada

This holiday gives you the chance to unwind and soak up the sun whilst discovering the best of Andalucía. From your 4-star hotel, enjoy trips to explore the cities of Cordoba, Seville and Granada, home of the stunning Alhambra Palace. Step inside and marvel at the grand halls, courtyards, and fountains, before stepping outside to the impressive Generalife Gardens. There's also the choice to visit cliff-top Ronda and cosmopolitan Malaga, or if you prefer you can simply relax at the hotel.

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Wildflowers of Crete

Departures | April 2024

EIGHT DAYS FROM
£1,399*
per person

Save up to £200 per couple on selected departures

Price Includes

- Return flights from London, overseas transfers & other transportation
- Seven nights in a four-star hotel
- Seven breakfasts, seven dinners
- Services of a Travelsphere Holiday Director
- Wildflower meadows and the White Mountains tour
- Chania and its Venetian harbour
- Explore the Akrotiri Peninsula
- Discover Spili, the Minoan Cemetery and ancient city of Aptera

Wildflowers and nature walks are at the heart of this holiday, as well as incredible history. Head to the Omalos Upland Plain and the Samaria Gorge, both home to an abundance of wildflowers including daphnes, tulips and peonies. Journey to Heraklion and admire the Old Town's Venetian walls and the ancient fortress. Discover more wildflowers during a botanical ramble around the Akrotiri Peninsula before a visit to Chania. And finally, head to the Minoan cemetery of Armenoi where a mass of spring flowers amidst the beautiful flower-strewn landscape are on display.

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Save up to £200 per couple on selected departures

EIGHT DAYS FROM
£1,899* per person

Norwegian Wonders – Cities, Fjords and Mountains

Departures | August 2023 to September 2024

Price Includes

- Return flights from London, overseas transfers & other transportation
- Seven nights in three & four-star hotels
- Seven breakfasts, three dinners
- Services of a Travelsphere Holiday Director
- City tours of Oslo and Bergen
- Ride the stunning Flam & Bergen railways
- Enjoy a breath-taking cruise on Sognefjord
- Orchard visit and cider tasting

Experience the unique and awe-inspiring landscapes of Norway. Beginning in the cosmopolitan city of Oslo, travel on the scenic Bergen railway to the mountain town of Myrdal. From here you'll join the iconic Flam railway through the steep mountainsides and past cascading waterfalls. Enjoy a cruise on the magnificent Sognefjord, scenic drives through lush valleys, past charming villages and stay in picturesque waterside hotels. The trip will end in Bergen, a historic city in the heart of the fjords.

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EIGHT DAYS FROM
£1,749* per person

Scenic Slovenia & Lake Bled

Departures | August 2024 to September 2024

Price Includes

- Return flights from London, overseas transfers & other transportation
- Seven nights in a four-star hotel
- Seven breakfasts, seven dinners
- Services of a Travelsphere Holiday Director
- Sightseeing tour of Bled and its castle
- Pletna boat ride to Bled Island
- Guided tour of Slovenia's cosmopolitan capital Ljubljana
- Farewell dinner with folklore dancing

Nestled in the heart of Europe, Slovenia is a hidden gem and a must-visit for travellers seeking something unique. Picturesque Bled is your base for this holiday where you'll explore the town, its castle and take a traditional pletna boat to the world-renowned Bled Island. Admire the splendid panorama of the impressive Julian Alps and soak up the atmosphere of Slovenia's capital Ljubljana. Enjoy a farewell dinner at a local restaurant which includes a folklore performance by local dancers.

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NINE DAYS FROM
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per person

Rockies Winter Wonderland

Departures | December 2023 to February 2025

Price Includes

- Return flights from London, overseas transfers & other transportation
- Seven nights' accommodation plus one night in flight
- Five breakfasts and welcome drink
- Services of a Travelsphere Holiday Director
- Tour of Banff National Park and Gondola ride
- Relax in Banff's Hot Springs
- Horse-drawn sleigh ride
- Jasper National Park tour
- Stay in the Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise

There's nothing more sensational than the Canadian Rockies in winter - snow-covered mountains and ice-covered lakes create a magical atmosphere. Head to the UNESCO-listed Banff National Park where you'll take the Banff Gondola cable car ride to the top of Sulphur Mountain for unrivalled views of Banff - a sight that will astound and delight. Enjoy a horse-drawn sleigh ride followed by a relaxing visit to Banff's natural hot springs. The adventure continues with a journey to Jasper National Park followed by a trip to the picture-perfect Lake Louise. Here, you'll stay at the famous Fairmount Chateau Lake Louise Hotel, situated right on the shore of the lake itself.

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12 DAYS FROM
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per person

The Best of Costa Rica

Departures | November 2023 to November 2025

Price Includes

- Return flights from London, overseas transfers & other transportation
- 10 nights' accommodation plus one night in flight
- 10 breakfasts, three lunches, three dinners
- Services of a Travelsphere Holiday Director
- Tour Costs Rica's vibrant capital, San Jose
- Explore Tortuguero National Park with jungle boat trip
- Visit the Hanging Bridges of Arenal
- Visit Carara National Park and Manual Antonio National Park
- Enjoy the Mi Cafecito Coffee Tour, a Travelsphere Cares Project

Explore enchanting Costa Rica, where lush forests and stunning beaches create breath-taking vistas and a home to incredible wildlife. Keep your eyes peeled for the locals - sloths, toucans, colourful butterflies, crocodiles and so much more. Journey by boat amongst jungle-canopied canals, view the Arenal Volcano, learn about the lives of Costa Rica's coffee producers and explore the Monteverde Cloud Forest, home to the incredibly vocal howler monkey!

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EIGHT DAYS FROM **£2,549*** per person

Treasures of Egypt Pyramids and a Nile Cruise

Departures | February to November 2025

Price Includes

- Return flights from London, overseas transfers & other transportation
- Three nights in a four-star hotel and four nights on board a five-star ship
- Seven breakfasts, five lunches, four dinners and daily afternoon tea on board the ship
- Services of a Travelsphere Holiday Director
- See the Pyramids of Giza and Sphinx
- Tour of Cairo and visit the El Khalili bazaar
- Explore the West Bank of the Nile including Valley of the Kings
- Tours of Karnak Temple and Luxor Temple

Enjoy a spell-binding tour of Egypt, a country steeped in history and full of awe-inspiring sights. Explore the mesmerising city of Cairo, its bustling bazaars and beautiful mosques. Immerse yourself in world-famous wonders including the pyramids and see the grandeur of ancient Egyptian civilization with the mesmerising temples of Luxor and Karnak. You'll also follow in the footsteps of pharaohs as you experience a four-night cruise along the Nile River on board the luxurious Steigenberger Minerva.

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Save up to £500 per couple on selected departures

17 DAYS FROM **£4,299*** per person

Ultimate South Africa

Departures | February 2024 to November 2025

Price Includes

- Return flights from London, overseas transfers & other transportation
- 14 nights in three & four-star hotels and lodges plus two nights in flight
- 14 breakfasts, two lunches, seven dinners and welcome drink
- Services of a Travelsphere Holiday Director
- Cape Town Tour and Table Mountain
- Cape Peninsula, Cape Point and Boulders Beach
- Winelands tour and tasting
- Zulu Battlefields visit
- Game drive in Kruger National Park

Discover the very best of South Africa on this all-encompassing tour. Explore the highlights of Cape Town and the Cape Peninsula before venturing to Stellenbosch in the Western Cape winelands and Knysna, a town at the heart of the famous Garden Route. From Port Elizabeth you'll fly to Durban and discover the KwaZulu-Natal battlefields on a tour. Kruger National Park is your next destination, where you'll head out in search of the Big Five, before a drive along the scenic Panorama Route completes this incredible adventure.

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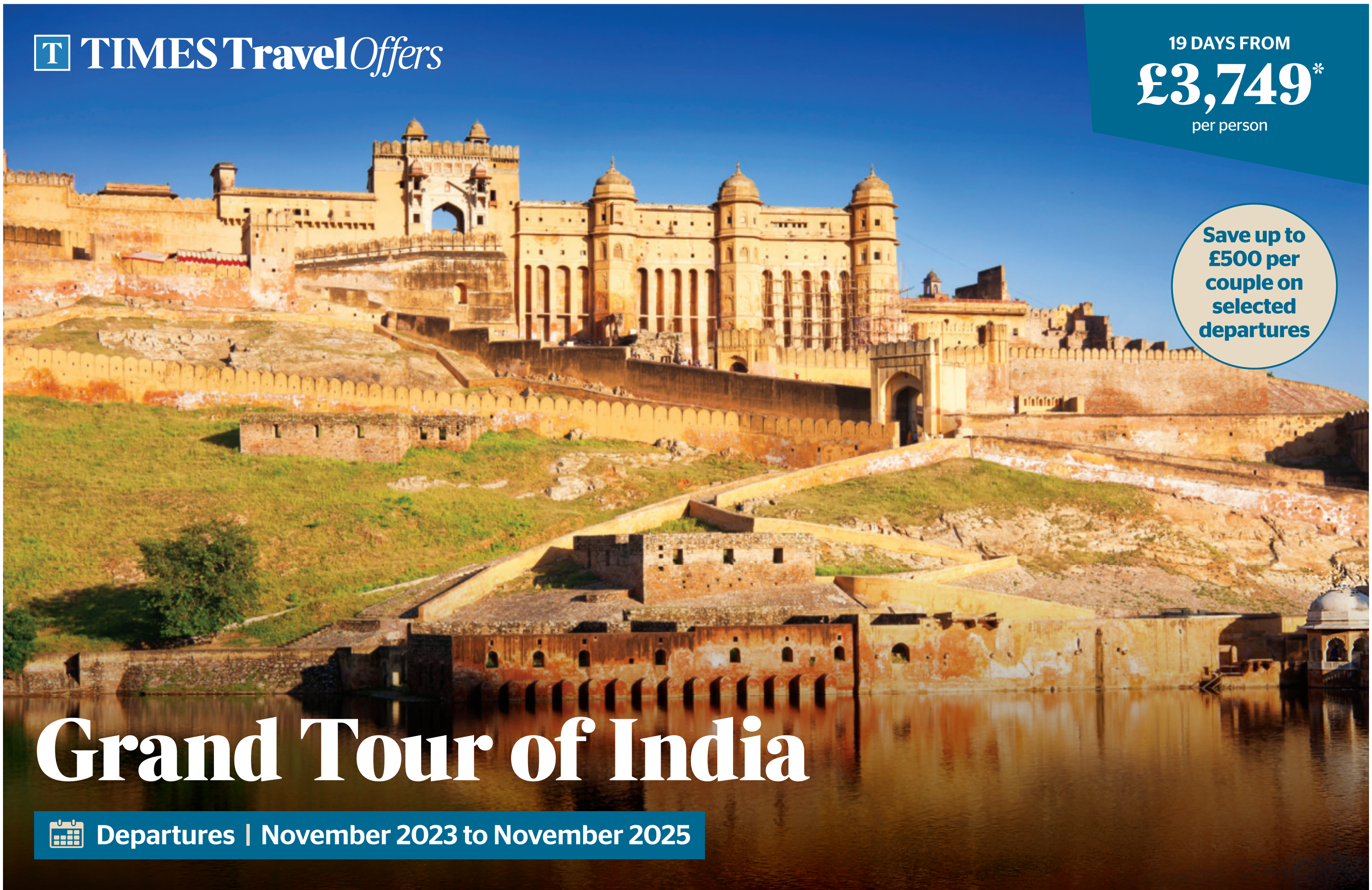
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19 DAYS FROM
£3,749* per person

Save up to £500 per couple on selected departures

Grand Tour of India

Departures | November 2023 to November 2025

This is the ultimate tour of India, taking you from the Golden Triangle in the north to Kerala's backwaters in the south. Tour Old Delhi in the company of former street children, who will introduce you to the India that few travellers get to see. Visit the stunning Taj Mahal and head off on two safaris in Ranthambore National Park in search of tigers. In Jaipur discover the Amber Fort and the magnificent City Palace. The pace slows as you head south to Kerala to explore Cochin and enjoy a cruise through backwaters looking out for local wildlife.

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Price Includes

- Return flights from London, overseas transfers & other transportation
- 16 nights in four and five-star hotels and a lodge plus two nights in flight
- 16 breakfasts, four lunches, 17 dinners
- Services of a Travelsphere Holiday Director
- Old Delhi and walk with former street children
- Visit New Delhi, Jaipur and Cochin
- Explore the iconic sights of the Taj Mahal, Agra Fort and Amber Fort
- Search for tigers on two safaris in Ranthambore
- Cruise amongst Kerala's tranquil backwaters

Memorable moment

Walking through the doors of the gatehouse to see perfectly manicured gardens and the grandeur of the Taj Mahal.



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